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5 Cents.

FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS;
OR, THE CAREER OF A FORTUNATE BOY *By A SELF-MADE MAN*
AND OTHER STORIES



Just as Joe raised the lid of the box, there sounded a quick footfall behind the boys. Glancing up, they saw the mysterious Frenchman with a heavy cane in his hand. Pointing at the box, he exclaimed, harshly: "That ee's mine!"

THE LITTLE BOYS

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TO SERIES OF

BOYS THAT MAKE

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

OR THE REVER OF A FORTUNATE BOY
AND OTHER STORIES



Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

— OR —

THE CAREER OF A FORTUNATE BOY

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERIOUS FRENCHMAN.

"Look yonder, Sam," cried Joe Page, suddenly clutching his companion by the arm and pointing at the wreck of an old stone house which loomed up grim and ghostly in the pale moonlight in the adjoining field; "there it is again—the same light I saw moving around there last night from the window of my room when I was going to bed."

"I see it," replied his friend, Sam Parsons. "There's somebody nosing around that old building with a lantern. Do you think it can be John, your hired man, looking for something he's lost?"

"No," answered Joe, in a decided tone, "it isn't John, for I spoke to him this morning about the light I saw there last night, and asked him if it was he that was poking around the old ruin, and he said no."

"Then who can it be? No stranger has any right on your property. Then, what object could any stranger have in prying around an old, dilapidated building like that, especially at this hour of the night?"

"Ask me something easier, Sam. Let's go over and see who it is, anyway."

"I'm with you. We'd better carry a club apiece to protect ourselves in case the stranger should turn out to be some pugnacious tramp inclined to resent our interference."

The two boys were leaning over the side veranda rail of the Page farmhouse, which stood back some distance from the country road.

Both were uncommonly bright-looking boys, about sixteen years of age, without a speck of hayseed in their make-up, although they had been raised on Ulster County farms.

The Page farm was situated about a mile from Pembroke village.

It comprised about ninety acres, of which sixty were suitable for tillage, the remainder being about equally divided between woodland and pasture.

Joe, with the assistance of a hired man named John Jones, ran the farm for his mother, who was a widow.

He had three sisters—nice, industrious girls—who were a great help about the place, especially in the summer, when Mrs. Page took a few boarders from New York City. Sam Parsons, Joe's particular crony, lived half a mile further out along the road.

He had a father, mother and one sister, and his folks also took in boarders during the summer season.

The Page property had once upon a time been two separate farms, divided by a rail fence.

Farmer Page, a year before his death, bought the adjoining

farm, on which stood an old stone house, a relic of Revolutionary days, for fifty dollars an acre, or seventeen hundred and fifty dollars for the thirty-five acres, paying five hundred and fifty dollars cash and giving a flat mortgage on the combined property for twelve hundred dollars to Squire Dalton, the village lawyer.

The stone house in question, which stood near the dividing fence, was little better than an antique ruin, and within the last week or two Joe and John Jones had been pulling a portion of it down.

They wanted the stone to build a substantial wall along the road in front of the farmhouse in place of the dilapidated, worm-eaten fence that had stood there for an indefinite number of years, and which, in Joe's opinion, at least, was a disgrace to the property.

On the previous evening Joe had seen a light moving about in the old stone house, and he supposed at the time that John Jones was out there for some purpose.

John, on being questioned in the morning, denied that he had been there at the hour mentioned, and so the boy wondered who the night visitor was.

The matter slipped from his mind until Sam and he were sitting together at the end of the front veranda that evening, soon after dark, when he told his friend about the circumstance.

He had scarcely finished his story when his sharp eye discovered the same light again, moving around the partially dismantled floor of the ancient edifice, and he called his companion's attention to it with the words that open this story.

Having decided to investigate the matter, the two boys went to the barn, got a stout cudgel each, and started for the stone house.

They approached the building with due caution, though they failed to see the light any more, and finally reached a window, bereft of sash, on the ground floor.

Looking through this, they beheld a man of average height kneeling in one corner of the room, busily engaged with a trowel in detaching one of the flagstones that formed the floor.

The lantern stood between him and the wall, and consequently his body cut off the reflection of the light.

The intruder wore a wide-brimmed felt hat, had a short cape over his shoulders, and his frock coat was buttoned close about him.

"What the dickens is he up to?" whispered Joe to his companion.

"Trying to lift one of those stones out of the floor, I guess," responded Sam.

"What does he want to do that for?"

"Search me," replied his friend.

"Mighty funny piece of business, don't you think?"

"Rather. He must be hunting for something."

"Why, what could he be hunting for in this old house?"

"You've got me. Hadn't we better ask him?"

"I don't like his appearance any more than I do his actions," said Joe.

Just then the intruder dropped his trowel and straightened up to wipe his face with his handkerchief, when the boys caught a fair view of his countenance.

It wasn't particularly reassuring.

His features were dark and saturnine, their expression rather fierce.

He had a long, stiff mustache and an imperial.

"He looks like a Frenchman," said Sam, under his breath.

"He does, for fair, and a most mysterious-looking one, at that," replied Joe. "I'd give something to know what his game is."

"It's up to you to ask him why he's trespassing on your property."

"He might have a revolver, and he looks ugly enough to shoot without much provocation."

"Are you going to let him pull the building down?" grinned Sam.

"If that was all he was up to, I shouldn't stop him. It would save John and me the trouble of doing it ourselves. We'll just watch him and see what he is trying to accomplish."

The mysterious Frenchman continued to dig the crumbling cement from around the stone with the most industrious perseverance.

Whatever he was trying to get at, he was thoroughly in earnest about it.

He paused now and again for a rest, but on the whole he wasted very little time.

At last he loosened the stone to such an extent that with the aid of a small bar of steel he pried it up and lifted it out of its receptacle.

Then he bent eagerly down, and the boys heard him utter an imprecation in a foreign tongue.

When he straightened up again his face was full of wrath and disappointment.

He took a paper from his pocket and consulted it by the aid of the lantern light.

Apparently he was puzzled.

He rose to his feet, muttering incoherent expressions between his teeth.

"He looks as mad as a hornet," chuckled Sam, nudging his companion.

"You mean a whole nest of hornets," grinned Joe.

"He expected to find something under that stone, and it isn't there," said Sam.

"I don't see what he could expect to find," replied Joe, somewhat puzzled.

"That paper he's got in his hand looks like a clue."

The Frenchman crumpled up the paper and flung it on the floor in a rage.

Then he kicked at it with great fury.

The paper being light, flew up into the air; the man's foot followed it so high that he overbalanced himself and came down on the floor with a thud that sent his hat flying from his head.

"Sacre bleu!" he roared.

The effect was so comical that Sam uttered a loud guffaw and Joe snickered gleefully.

The Frenchman heard the laugh and turned a startled face toward the window, but Joe ducked his head and pulled his companion away just in time to escape observation.

"He heard you," whispered Joe. "Come hide behind that pile of stone."

They had hardly concealed themselves before the foreigner's face appeared at the window.

He looked all around, but saw nobody.

Presently he left the window, and in a few minutes the boys saw him leave the building, with the lantern, now out, in his hand, and make his way across the fields toward the road.

They waited till he was out of sight before leaving their hiding-place.

"Let's go inside and see what we can see," said Joe.

"All right," replied Sam, and inside the building they went.

Striking a match, they looked around and saw that a stone, at a certain distance from each of the four corners, had been removed from the flooring.

The earth beneath was pretty solid and had resisted the several attempts of the Frenchman to make much of an impression in it with his trowel.

"I guess that fellow was crazy," chuckled Joe. "The idea of digging up those two stones! What could he have been hunting for?"

"Hunting for gold, maybe," replied Sam, with a laugh. "Say, that was the funniest fall I ever saw a man get in my life. Wasn't he mad at that piece of paper?"

Sam roared again as he thought of the ludicrous picture the mysterious Frenchman had cut when his foot went above the level of his head.

"There's the piece of paper now," said Joe, walking over and picking it up. "I wonder what is on it?"

He smoothed it out, then lighted a match and proceeded to examine it, Sam, with some curiosity, looking over his shoulder.

There were several lines of writing on it, but the words were unintelligible to the boys.

"That must be French," remarked Sam.

"It certainly isn't English," answered Joe. "I'd like to know what it means."

"I don't see how you're going to find out."

"I know what I'll do. I'll take it down to that professor who's stopping at the inn in the village. Maybe he'll be able to translate it."

"That isn't a bad idea. I'm curious myself to learn what it means. It must amount to something, and have connection with this old building, judging from the Frenchman's actions."

"That's right. There's some mystery in this matter that I should like to unravel. No sane man would come digging and hunting around an old abandoned house like this one unless he had some definite object in view."

"Whatever the object was, the Frenchman seems to have failed in his quest. I don't suppose you'll see or hear from him again."

"Maybe not, but you can't tell," replied Joe, putting the paper in his pocket. "Let's get out of here."

They returned to the farmhouse, and soon afterward Sam Parsons started for his home.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THE PAPER.

Joe Page was more interested in that bit of paper thrown away by the mysterious Frenchman than he cared to let on to his friend Sam Parsons.

He believed there was something in it, even if it had fooled the foreigner.

As he couldn't translate it himself, he intended to get Professor Burgess, a learned gentleman who had come to the village for his health, to do it for him, provided, of course, that the professor could read French.

So immediately after breakfast he started for the village.

Professor Burgess was on the point of setting out for a walk when Joe reached the inn.

He had a slight acquaintance with the professor, having met him one day along the road, and got in conversation with him as they walked along together.

On the strength of this he took the liberty of addressing the learned gentleman, who shook hands with him and seemed quite pleased to see the lad again.

"Do you understand French, Professor Burgess?" asked Joe, coming to the point as soon as possible.

The professor replied that he did.

"Then you would do me a great favor by translating a few lines in that language for me," said the boy, taking the paper discarded by the Frenchman out of his pocket and handing it to the gentleman. "I am very anxious to learn the meaning of that writing."

"I will turn it into English for you with pleasure," said Professor Burgess, after glancing over the paper. "Come into the writing-room."

Joe followed him into the inn.

The professor seated himself at one of the tables, and, taking a sheet of note paper, wrote out the following words, which he handed to Joe:

"Old stone house, near road, about one mile west of Pembroke village, Ulster County, New York State, U. S. A."

"Ground floor, kitchen, northwest corner, third slab diagonally southwest."

Joe read the translation slowly, and was rather disappointed at the result.

"Is that the whole thing, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. That's all that's on the paper. Can you understand what it means now?"

"Not altogether, sir; but I may be able to get at the meaning

after I study it a while. Seems like directions for discovering something, doesn't it, sir?"

"You might take it as such. In which case the object to be recovered seems to be under the third slab in a diagonal direction from the northwest corner of the kitchen on the ground floor of a certain stone house, near a road, one mile west of this village. Do you know of such a house in this vicinity?"

"Yes, sir. The only stone house that I know of in this county is on our property, which is just about a mile west of the village."

"Indeed? It must be the one indicated in this paper, then. All you will have to do is to follow these directions, lift the slab in question, and see if there is anything under it. That ought to be easy for you."

"It would, sir, if the house wasn't a wreck, with nothing to show which room was the kitchen. I've already pulled one side of the building to pieces to get stone to build a wall along the front of a portion of our property."

"How did you come in possession of this paper, and why do you imagine that it has any special significance?"

Joe told him about the mysterious Frenchman's two visits to the ruins of the old stone house, and how the man's conduct had aroused his curiosity.

"If this paper means anything, the Frenchman must have been hunting in the wrong room," said Professor Burgess. "I presume you have no idea what he was looking for?"

"No, sir. Judging from his actions and persistency, I should think it was something important," replied the boy.

"How much of the building is still standing?"

"About two-thirds."

"Well, if you have the time, and think it worth your while, you might look the ground floor of the house over in connection with these directions and see what you can make of them. It is not improbable, but you might come upon some hidden treasure-trove, as it were. Money as well as other valuables have occasionally been found hidden away in old dwellings. These directions seem to point at some such conclusion with reference to the ancient building on your mother's property. At any rate, I think it worth an effort on your part. You have nothing to lose but your time, and possibly something to gain, by looking into the matter. I advise you to do it. If you are fortunate in making a discovery, I should be glad to have you let me know about it, so that I may congratulate you."

"Thank you, sir. I will certainly do so, if I find anything; but I have no great hopes of any such luck."

"Then you will not be greatly disappointed if nothing comes of it," laughed the professor. "That will be some satisfaction, at any rate."

"That's right, sir," replied Joe, as he raised his hat and walked away, while Professor Burgess started off in the opposite direction.

As Joe drew near home he took a short cut across an adjacent field.

Passing close to a clump of bushes, he suddenly tripped over what he at first imagined to be a log, but instead of a log it proved to be a leg.

Then, to the boy's consternation, the mysterious Frenchman sprang up with a fierce imprecation.

"Ah, cochon!" he exclaimed, shaking a big walking-stick menacingly. "You Americans are clumsy peegs!"

"I beg your pardon," apologized Joe, hastily. "I didn't see your leg. I hope I didn't hurt you, sir."

"Bah!" retorted the foreigner, turning his back on the boy and stalking off.

"He's a fierce rooster," muttered Joe, looking after him. "I wonder why he was lying around in these bushes? He must be half-cracked."

As the farmer lad turned to go on he noticed something glistening on the ground.

He reached down and picked it up.

It proved to be a sterling silver box, gold lined, partly filled with a fine brown powder which proved to be snuff.

On the cover was an engraved inscription in French, the only words of which Joe could understand were "Jules Glorieux" and "Bordeaux."

"This must be the property of that crazy Frenchman. Where has he gone to?"

The boy looked around the field, but he could see no sign of the foreigner.

"He disappeared mighty quick. He is a mysterious chap, if I ever heard of one."

After hesitating a moment or two, Joe finally walked on toward home, with the snuff-box in his hand.

He had hardly reached the fence facing the country road, across which was the gate leading to the Page farmhouse, when he heard hasty steps behind him.

He turned around and gave a gasp—the mysterious Frenchman was approaching him at a rapid gait, and with eyes that seemed to flash fire.

"C'est un brigand—ma chere tabatiere!" he roared, making a snatch at the snuff-box, which Joe held in his hand. "By gar! You are von t'ief!"

"What's the matter with you?" retorted the boy. "I found it on the ground."

"You found him, eh? It ees mine, comprenez vous? You hand him ovaire."

"Sure thing. I guess it's yours, all right. Your name is Jules Glorieux?"

"Oui," and he snatched the box out of Joe's hand. "Aha! C'est inestimable. I could not part wis dis for nossing. Allez!" waving his arm to the boy, at the same time turning quickly around and returning in the direction he came.

Joe didn't understand what "allez" (go) meant, but, as the Frenchman glared at him when he said it, he judged that it was a kind of curt dismissal.

John Jones, who was working on the stone wall, told him that Sam Parsons had just gone up to the house to wait for him, and so Joe hurried on to meet his friend.

"Well," said Sam, "did you find out the meaning of that paper?"

"I've got a translation of it," his friend replied.

"Have you?" eagerly. "What does it say?"

"Read it for yourself," replied Joe, taking the English copy made by Professor Burgess from his pocket and handing it to Sam.

"Is that all it amounts to?" asked Sam, in a tone of disappointment.

"That's all."

"It wasn't worth the trouble of having it translated."

"How do you know it wasn't?"

"Well, I don't see anything in it."

"I don't say there's anything in it now, so far as the paper directions go, but I've an idea, just the same, that there is something of value buried somewhere under the foundation of that building. As soon as I get it all pulled down I'm going to plough up the ground and see what I can find."

"That's a good plan. Still, if we knew which room was originally used as the kitchen of the old house, we might make a search first."

"The room where the Frenchman dug up the slabs doesn't look as if it had ever been used as a kitchen, but, just the same, it is the only one that is paved with slabs. That's why he tackled it, I guess. By the way, what do you think? I came across that mysterious Frenchman a little while ago and had a run-in with him," said Joe, with a grin.

"You did? Where did you meet him?" asked Sam, with a look of interest.

"In that field down yonder."

"You don't say? What was he doing there?"

"He didn't seem to be doing anything but lying in the bushes. Taking a rest or a snooze, maybe. I fell over one of his legs, and the way he went at me in French was a caution," chuckled Joe. "He called me a clumsy peeg."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sam. "What did you say to that?"

"I apologized for tripping over him. He said, 'Bah!' and skidooed."

"I wish I'd been there," snickered Sam.

"After he'd gone I found a silver snuff-box on the ground that he'd dropped. It had his name engraved on it, with the word 'Bordeaux' and something else in French that I couldn't read."

"Let me see it," said Sam, holding out his hand.

"Sorry, but he discovered his loss and chased after me. He called me a brigand and a thief and snatched the box out of my hand."

He did?"

Joe nodded.

"What is the chap's name, if you know it?"

"Jules Glorieux."

"That sounds Frenchy enough, at any rate. I s'pose he hails from Bordeaux."

"Very likely. He ought to go back and stay there."

"Looks as if he was still hanging around intending to revisit the old building to-night. Perhaps he means to do some more digging."

"I shouldn't be surprised. We must keep a watch on him and see what he accomplishes. Now, Sam, if you've nothing on hand this morning you might give me a lift moving some

of that stone down to the road where John is building the wall. It will be a great help to me."

"All right, Joe. I'm willing to make myself useful."

The two boys then went to the barn to harness a horse to the drag.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRASS-BOUND BOX.

For the rest of the morning the boys worked like beavers loading stone taken from the demolished walls of the old house to the drag and hauling it down to the road where John was working on the new wall.

At noon Joe called a halt when one of his sisters rang a big bell at the kitchen door announcing that dinner was ready.

After the meal the boys returned to the work.

It was about four o'clock that they were clearing away the last of the debris from a corner of the dismantled part of the stone house, when Joe noticed a slab sunk a little way in the ground.

It had not formed part of the original flooring of the room, now almost completely demolished, but had evidently been under it.

Merely by accident had Joe observed it, for it was thickly coated with dirt and therefore resembled the hard ground all around it.

The boy looked at it with some curiosity, wondering what it was doing there.

Sam was just then returning with the drag, and Joe, picking up a crowbar and motioning to the other bar that lay on the ground, called his companion to help him dig the slab up.

They set to work at once to pry it out of the ground.

"Is this slab part of the old floor?" asked Sam.

"No," replied Joe. "It's way below the level of the old floor."

"Then why is it imbedded in the ground? Looks as if it had been there some time."

"I haven't any idea why it's there," replied Joe. "From the trouble we're having to loosen it, I should say it was put there to stay."

"Do you think there's anything under it?" asked Sam suddenly, pausing in his work and regarding his friend with a look of interest.

"Why, what should be under it?"

"It just struck me that this might be the slab the Frenchman was trying to find."

"By George! I plumb forgot all about that. Maybe it is," added Joe, in some excitement. "Let's get a hustle on and see if there is anything under it."

Sam needed no further encouragement, but sinking his crowbar under the edge of the slab, began to bear down with all his might.

Joe jammed his bar alongside of Sam's and added his weight to try and overcome the resistance offered by the imbedded stone.

Slowly it began to yield to their united efforts and moved upward a fraction of an inch at a time.

"It's a mighty tough proposition, all right," said Sam, stopping to wipe his perspiring forehead.

"It is that. Just jab away some more of the dirt from that side while I do the same with this side. Maybe we'll be able to hoist it out then."

They dug the packed earth way until both side edges were exposed when they got busy once more with the crowbars.

The slab now moved with more freedom and the boys, dropping the bars, grabbed hold of the edge and began to pull it backward.

"There's a hole under it, I can see that," said Sam.

"Yes, and there's something in the hole, too," cried Joe, when they had lifted it up at a right angle with the surface of the ground. "Now, then, once more, all together!"

They exerted all their strength upon it when it suddenly gave way and over it went kerchunk, carrying both boys on their backs.

"Heavens! I hit my head on one of those stones," cried Sam, sitting up with a grimace and rubbing his skull with his hand.

Joe picked himself up without a word and crawled to the edge of the hole to look into it.

He uttered a loud shout.

"There's a brass-bound box down here, Sam. Get up quick and help me pull it out," he cried excitedly.

"A brass-bound box!" repeated Sam, staring at his companion.

Then he forgot all about his sore head and sprang to his feet, fully as excited as Joe Page.

"May I be jiggered if it isn't so," he said as soon as he gazed into the hole. "Looks as if it was a money box. I'll bet that's what the Frenchy was after."

"I'm sure it is. Well, this is where he gets left. At any rate it belongs to me as it was found on our farm."

"Jingo! I wish I was you," said Sam, enviously.

"Never mind, Sam, I shan't forget to do what's right if there's anything valuable in the box, for you're helping at the job."

"If that's full of money there must be a small fortune in it," said Sam.

"Perhaps we'd better not crow till we're out of the woods. It may be full of old papers and documents of no value, except to the man who hid them here."

"Oh, come now, don't say that, Joe. I've made up my mind it's money, and if it turns out to be nothing but papers I'll have a fit," said Sam.

"The quickest way to find out the truth is to get it up where we can break it open, and have a look. Come now, lend a hand."

They bent down and each seized one of the heavy, tarnished brass handles.

"Now, then, up with it," cried Joe.

The order was easier uttered than executed, for the box was decidedly heavy.

"That doesn't feel like papers, old man," said Sam. "It's full of gold, bet your life."

"How much will you bet on it?" laughed Joe.

"I'll bet a dollar to a doughnut," grinned Sam.

"Bet your small change first, Sam. You're getting too reckless."

"This is no food of a job lifting this box out," said Sam, after they had tugged at it awhile, raising it a few inches only to let it drop back again.

"If it hasn't got gold in it it must have lead," replied Joe, as they paused to take a rest.

"Lead! What would it be filled with lead for?"

"I was only joking. Of course such a strong box as this wouldn't have lead in it. I'm inclined to think it may be filled with silver plate. Lots of people buried their plate while the Revolutionary War was in progress whenever the enemy was reported to be in the neighborhood."

"But they took good care to dig it up again when the danger was over."

"Sure they did; but this may be a case where the family was wiped out either by Indians or a band of villainous Tories."

"That's right. There were lots of Indians up this way during the Revolutionary times, and later," said Sam, who had heard something about the early history of the country.

"Well, Sam, it's getting late, and if we're going to get the box out of this hole before sundown we want to get a move on."

"Well, lift your end and I'll jab the crowbar under it."

This plan was executed, and the other crowbar inserted under the box also.

"Now we'll both get hold of the same handle and pull it up the inclined plane. Maybe we can get it out that way," said the resourceful Sam.

Sam's scheme was adopted with ultimate success, and the brass-bound box landed on the ground.

Joe first proposed to load the box on the drag and carry it over to the house just as it was, deferring the examination of its contents till he and Sam got it up to his room; but their eagerness to see what was in the box, and the fact that the heavy hasp holding the cover was loose decided Joe to break it open at once.

He grasped a crowbar and smashed the hasp off with a single blow, then he dropped on his knees beside it and proceeded to lift the cover while Sam, his tanned countenance flushed with excitement, leaned forward to get a closer look at the contents.

Just as Joe raised the lid of the box there sounded a quick footfall behind the boys.

Glancing up, they saw the mysterious Frenchman, with a heavy cane in his hand.

Pointing at the box, he said harshly:

"Dat ees mine!"

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE BOX CONTAINED.

The boys were rather staggered by the unwelcome and unexpected appearance of the Frenchman, and Joe let the cover of the box drop back again.

Both stared at the fierce-looking foreigner without saying a word.

"By gar! What are you doing wiz dat box?" he demanded. "Dat ees mine, comprenez vous? Eet ees what I have hunt for dese one, two, t'ree nights. Parbleu, I take him wiz me dis minute."

"Hold on, monsoo," spoke up Joe. "Don't be so sure about it. This property belongs to my mother, and consequently everything on it and in it is ours. You haven't the faintest claim to this box."

"Aha! Vat ees dat? Your muzair she own dees box?"

"That's what she does," replied Joe.

"By gar! You are fonee boy," answered the mysterious Frenchman, in a sarcastic tone. "She has nossing to do wiz dees box. Eet ees mine. I come all ze way from la belle France to get eet. I had ze papier dat point out ze way."

"Perhaps you can tell us what's in the box, you seem to know so much," said Joe, with a grin.

"Dat ees my beesness," replied the Frenchman, impatiently.

"Well, it's our business, too, monsoo."

"Non—non! Allez! Allez!" cried the excited foreigner.

"What the dickens do you mean by Allay?" said Joe.

"Go! Comprenez?"

"I comprennay, but I'm not going just the same. When you say this box is yours you are talking through your hat."

Clearly the Frenchman did not understand what Joe said, but one thing was certain, he was growing more angry every moment.

He was bent on getting possession of the box, while the boys were just as obstinate in their refusal to let him have it.

In fact, the idea of resigning the box was the last thing in their thoughts.

"Sacre!" cried Jules Glorieux. "You play wiz me. I feex you."

He put his hand in his pocket and drew a revolver.

"Now we see whezair you give ze box or not."

Sam had been standing aside leaning on his crowbar, an interested observer of the breezy proceedings.

If Joe gave the word he was prepared to jump in and help hustle the Frenchman off the lot.

When he saw the mysterious foreigner draw his gun, he gave a gasp of fear, then on the spur of the moment he lifted the crowbar and struck the man a blow on the arm, causing him to utter a pain and to drop the weapon, which Sam quickly took possession of.

Monsieur Glorieux immediately turned upon Parsons and lifted the cane he had in his left hand to strike the boy, but Sam jumped back and pointed the revolver at him.

That stopped the infuriated Frenchman at once, and he stood glaring at Sam.

At that exciting moment John, the hired man, appeared unexpectedly on the scene.

"Hello," he said, with a look of bewilderment on his face, "what's the trouble here?"

"Sam and I just found this brass-bound box in a hole in these ruins, and that Frenchman stepped up and claimed it. Why, it's been buried here a hundred years, I guess, so what right has he to it?"

"Nevair mind," put in Jules Glorieux at this point, perceiving that he was at a great disadvantage. "Eet ees ze long lane dat ees not turned. Comprenez vous? I see you some ozzaire time."

With those words he walked away.

They watched him climb the fence and take his way down the road, and then Sam said:

"You came just in time, John, to make the odds too great for the Frenchy."

"Where did you find the box, Joe?" asked the hired man.

"In that hole underneath yonder slab. Sam and I had a deuce of a time getting it out. I had hardly broken the lock before that foreigner appeared and had the nerve to say the box was his."

"What's in the box?"

"We haven't had a chance to see yet. I'll open it now."

Joe threw up the cover of the brass-bound chest and disclosed a score or more of fat-bellied bags, each tied at the mouth with a bit of cord.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Sam, with bulging eyes. "Bags of money or I'm a liar. Jumping grasshoppers! What a find!"

John Jones gazed dumfounded at the unusual sight, while Joe, although he had expected a revelation of some kind, either in plate or money, was too surprised to speak for a moment or two.

Sam dived his hand in and lifted out one of the bags.

The impression of the coin upon the surface of the bag could plainly be seen and left no room for the least doubt as to the character of its contents.

The only question was whether it was gold or silver.

Sam, anxious to solve this query, loosened the throat of the bag he held, and a stream of old gold coin, all English sovereigns, rolled out on the palm of his hand.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "I never saw so much gold in all my life before."

As a matter of fact, Sam hadn't seen a dozen gold pieces, all told, since he knew what money was.

"Put it back, Sam," said Joe, "and we'll carry the box to the house. Then we will count it and see how much the treasure amounts to."

Sam returned the coins to the bag and tied it up again reluctantly.

It was sad to reflect that none of this money was his.

He had never wished for money so bad in all his life before.

John helped the boys put the box on the drag, and then the party took up their line of march for the farmhouse.

When they reached their destination the treasure-box was lifted onto the veranda and then dragged into the hall.

"Tell mother and the girls to come here," said Joe to the hired man, and presently Mrs. Page, followed by Mildred, Fanny and Winnie, her daughters, came trooping out to the front door to see what was in the wind.

"See what Sam and I found in the foundation of the old stone house yonder," said Joe, pointing at the box.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Mildred, "what a funny looking box. What's in it?"

"Guess," said her brother.

"Books?"

"No. What do you think is in it, Fanny?"

"Old clothes."

"You're away off. Now it's your turn, Winnie."

"Maybe it's full of money," laughed the youngest sister, though she didn't really believe it was.

"That's a good guess, Winnie," chuckled Joe. "How did you know?"

"What is in it, Joe?" asked Winnie.

"Why, you guessed it—money, and chock full, too."

"Nonsense!" put in Mildred. "Do tell us what's in it if you know. Can't you see that our curiosity is aroused?"

"Then you don't believe it's full of bags of money?"

"Of course I don't. That would be too absurd."

"All right. Now I'm going to open it and show you how close Winnie came to the truth. Are you all looking?"

"Yes, yes, yes," cried the girls together.

"There you are," and Joe flung the cover back.

"Oh-o-o!" screamed the girls, in great astonishment when they saw the bags.

That those bags were full of real money seemed too good to be true, and Mildred had her suspicions that Joe and Sam were playing a joke on them.

"I don't believe that's money at all," she said, tossing her head. "You boys have made those bags and filled them full of something or another just to try and fool us."

Fanny, however, made a grab for one of the bags to test its weight probably, when the string that secured its neck came untied and a stream of coin flowed out like a waterfall, and danced and jingled all over the floor.

The girls shrieked in real amazement now.

Joe and Sam hastened to recover the coins and return them to the bag.

"My gracious! It is money—real new gold," cried Mildred. "Why Joe Page, did you really find that in the old stone house?"

"That's exactly what Sam and I did. We dug it up from under a big slab of stone, where it must have lain for the dickens knows how long—maybe a hundred years."

"There must be thousands of dollars in that box," exclaimed Fanny.

"If the contents of all the bags are gold, there's quite a fortune here. Let me see how many bags there are," said her brother. "Twenty," he said after counting them. "If there is \$5,000 in each bag that would make a hundred thousand."

A fresh chorus of astonishment arose at this rough calculation.

"You're not going to keep it yourself, are you?" said Mildred. "You're going to give it to mother."

"I think I will divide it up after Sam and I count it. Sam is entitled to a bag, at least, for helping me dig it up. Then I might put a bag in the bank for each of you girls, which would make you heiresses in a small way."

"And how much are you going to give mother?" insisted Mildred.

"As much as she wants. We'll be able to pay off that mortgage now, and get new carpets, and furniture, and we won't need to take any boarders this summer."

"Won't that be a blessing," exclaimed Fanny.

"Come, Sam, help me upstairs with the box," said Joe. "I'm anxious to count this treasure and find out what it foots up."

The girls were quite crazy with delight as they followed their mother back to the kitchen where preparations for supper were going on, and they couldn't talk of anything but the nice things they expected to have now, the new clothes they were going to buy, and the splurge they intended to cut in the village.

As for Joe and Sam, as soon as they got the box up in Joe's room they barricaded the door against visitors and sat down to count the money.

It was all in English sovereigns of a date previous to 1780, and they looked as if they had come fresh from a mint.

Each bag contained exactly £1,000, or about \$4,840, which being multiplied by twenty, the number of bags, made a grand total of \$96,800.

"You could buy the whole village up with that," said Sam. "You folks will be the great moguls around here after this. Squire Dalton will have to take a back seat. I shall be glad to see him taken down a peg or two. He and his son put on altogether too many frills to suit me."

"Well, Sam," said Joe, "just help yourself to one of these bags. You've earned it, and \$5,000 will be quite a little stake for you."

"Do you mean that, Joe?" asked his friend, almost paralyzed at the idea of possessing such a large sum of money which he could call all his own.

"Sure I do. Take your choice, though they're all alike as far as their value goes."

"But it's all English money. What shall I do with it, the bank won't accept it."

"Take it down to New York and have it changed into U. S. notes at the current exchange rates. That's what I'm going to do with these nineteen bags."

"I'll go with you," said Sam, and it was so arranged between them.

CHAPTER V.

THAT DREAM WAS NOT ALL A DREAM.

"Ninety-two thousand dollars!" exclaimed Mrs. Page that evening at the supper table, when Joe told in round numbers the result of the count, while his three sisters held their breath at the magnitude of the amount.

"Yes, mother, or to be more exact, \$91,960, at the current rates of exchange," replied the boy, with a happy grin. "It's a lot of money, isn't it?"

"It is too much money to have in a lone farmhouse even for a single night," answered his mother. "I shan't sleep a wink all night."

"Neither will I," cried Mildred, with an anxious look.

"Nor I," exclaimed Fanny and Winifred with one breath.

"Oh, nonsense!" laughed Joe. "Who will know that we've got it?"

He had prudently refrained from mentioning the adventure with the mysterious Frenchman, as he knew the recital would only serve to make his mother and sisters extremely nervous.

"Sam Parsons will be sure to tell his folks, and then the news will get all about the neighborhood," said Mildred.

"No, he won't. I cautioned him against it, and he promised to be as mute as a mopstick."

"But his father and mother will want to know where he got the bag of sovereigns you gave him for helping you get the box out of the hole and up to the house."

"He isn't going to show it to them, at least not until we are ready to take the gold to New York to exchange it for bank notes."

"When are you going to do that?" asked Mildred, earnestly.

"To-morrow forenoon."

"You must take John with you as a guard," said his mother.

"I should think you'd have a great deal of difficulty in making the exchange of such a big sum of English money," said Mildred.

"I may and I may not. I'm going to take the gold to a safe deposit company first for safekeeping, and consult with the president of that institution as to the best way to exchange it for bills."

"That's an excellent idea, Joe," said his mother. "I was going to suggest something of that kind. It seems to me the only proper and business-like way to conduct the matter."

"That's right, mother. I have an idea that the safe deposit people will attend to the whole thing for me for a commission."

"How are you going to carry the money to New York?" asked Fanny. "In that box?"

"Oh, no, Fan; that would look too conspicuous. I mean to box it up in those four small starch boxes we have in the cellar. It will look like ordinary merchandise then."

"Are they strong enough? It would be dreadful if they broke open in the handling."

"I'll prevent that by nailing several iron bands around each of them. They keep that stuff on a roll at the big store in the village, and you can buy it by the yard. You've seen it nailed around the edge of cases, haven't you?"

"I think I have," answered Fanny. "I hope you'll put plenty of it about them, for you can't be too careful with that money."

"Leave that to me, Fanny. I'm not taking any more chances than I can help."

After supper Joe started for the village general store to purchase a liberal supply of the thin iron box binding, and while he was away John Jones was stationed in the boy's room to stand guard over the treasure chest, with the Frenchman's revolver within easy reach.

As soon as Joe returned home the four starch boxes were got out of the cellar, and as fast as the boy packed a box with bags of money, filled up the vacant places with excelsior packing, of which they had a quantity in the house, and nailed on the cover securely, John put six iron bands around it.

The boxes were as weighty as a person would care to lift, for three held each about \$24,000, while the fourth footed up something over \$19,000.

"I guess they'll hold, all right, John," said Joe, viewing the iron-bound boxes critically. "They're pretty heavy. Would you carry one of those to the village on your shoulders if I gave it to you?"

"I'll bet I would," replied the hired man, emphatically.

"How many times would you have to stop and rest," grinned Joe.

"A hundred times, I guess."

"I'll bet it would take you all night to get there."

"Supposin' it did, it would pay, wouldn't it?"

The boxes were piled up in a corner of the room and some old clothes thrown over them, while the brass-bound chest was shoved under Joe's bed for the present.

The house was more carefully locked up that night than usual, while Joe put the Frenchman's revolver under his pillow.

While he didn't exactly expect any trouble, it was the part of prudence to be prepared for it if it came.

It was true that the mysterious foreigner had as good as handed him out a threat when he withdrew from the scene of action that afternoon, but Joe couldn't see how the Frenchman would be able to do anything towards getting possession of the treasure of the old stone house, as he seemed to be alone in the scheme.

"Why, he couldn't carry a single box of that stuff any distance even if he got a chance at it; that is, unless he had a horse and wagon, and everything his own way. His threats amount to nothing. He said he came from France to hunt for the box. That's a long distance for a sane man to come on a wild goose chase. He must have picked up his knowledge over there from some person acquainted with the facts of the case, who furnished him with the directions on that paper he had. The chest seems to have lain under that slab something like a hundred years. It's a wonder no previous attempt was made to bring it to light. That stone house was tenantless for years before my father bought the property. It was a fortunate deal for us. When Squire Dalton hears that we found nearly \$100,000 on the property that he sold my father, for \$1,750, he'll feel like tearing his hair out by the roots. He won't get over his chagrin as long as he lives. Joe chuckled as he pictured the effect of the news on the

pompous lawyer who considered himself the whole thing, not only in the village but the county as well.

"It will be a huge take-down for him," thought the boy as he put out his light and jumped into bed.

Then he began to think about next day's journey to the metropolis with his treasure boxes in company with Sam Parsons.

"After we get through with the business end of the trip, Sam and I'll have the time of our lives for a few days before coming back home. We'll take in all the sights, go to the theater, and enjoy every five minutes to the utmost. I tell you money makes the mare go every time."

With these pleasant reflections on his mind Joe fell asleep.

Joe's slumbers were seldom intruded upon by dreams—he was too sound a sleeper, as a general thing, for that—but the present occasion was an exception.

His brain was excited by the golden experiences of the afternoon, and though it was many hours before certain odd fancies took shape and reproduced themselves upon his sleeping thoughts, the fact that they did so at last was no great wonder under the circumstances.

His first dream was a pleasant one, for in it he seemed to have evolved from a comparatively poor farm boy to a young Monte Cristo with money to burn, and he was burning it at a great rate, and with intense satisfaction, when the scene changed and he found himself walking along a dark and lonesome country road, which he seemed to recognize, with all his pockets stuffed to overflowing with gold coin that he had just found somewhere.

A sense of undefined terror now seemed to be upon him, for he felt sure that he was being followed by an enemy who intended to get the money away from him.

The journey seemed to be endless, and while he didn't see the man who was dogging his steps he was confident his pursuer knew where he was and was biding his time, the better to accomplish his dark design.

Finally he came to a wood that stretched away for miles and miles in either direction so that he could not avoid entering it in order to reach his destination.

As he progressed through this wood something whispered to him that his enemy was now closing in upon him—that their meeting could not long be postponed.

At this thought his terror grew upon him till he could hardly drag one foot after the other.

At length he reached a clearing and felt compelled to sit down here and rest.

Suddenly he was conscious that somebody was creeping upon him from behind.

Until this moment he had had but a vague idea of who his enemy really was.

Now, although something prevented him from turning his head, or making any effort to escape, he instinctively understood that the person who was stealthily advancing upon him was a mysterious Frenchman, who carried a heavy stick in one hand and a long, keen knife in the other.

Strive as he would he could not break the spell that held him powerless.

At last he could feel that the man was right behind him, that he had dropped his stick and put the knife between his teeth so that he could have his hands free to seize him by the throat.

Now the man bent over him and glared into his eyes, with a look of such malignant satisfaction that the horror of it shot through his nerves and awoke him.

Yes, Joe was now wide awake, but the horror of his dream was reproduced in dread reality, for bending above him, with a sinister looking knife in his teeth, and his bent fingers raised as if in the act of pouncing on the heretofore sleeping boy, was Jules Glorieux, the mysterious Frenchman.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THEFT OF THE GOLD.

"Aha! You awake, eh?" hissed the Frenchman, seeing the boy's startled, wide-open eyes fixed upon his face. "You make one leetle sound, by gar, and you are a dead boy!"

He pressed one hand on Joe's windpipe, and with the other removed the knife from his mouth and pressed its keen point against the tender skin of the lad's throat.

Joe was now conscious that Jules Glorieux was not the only intruder in the room.

There was another whose form was thrown into relief by the pale moonshine that came through the open window.

"Ecoutez!" exclaimed Glourieux fiercely. "Dat ees, you listen to me. Ze boot ees on ze ozzair leg. Ze lane which I

speak about has come to ze turn. I have you, mon petit homme, where ze hair ees short. You move one leetle bit, poof! zis knife vill do ze beesness. I come for ze box dat ees mine. I get him dees time."

The Frenchman turned his head and said something in a peremptory tone to his companion.

The man advanced softly, at the same time taking a strong cord from his pocket.

With this he proceeded to bind Joe's arms to his side.

Then he tied a towel tightly around the boy's mouth.

"Now look for the box," said Glorieux to the man in French.

The pair hunted about the room.

They pulled the clothes from the four iron-bound starch boxes, and Glorieux was about to lift one when his companion called him to the bed and pointed at the end of the treasure chest which lay underneath.

"It is heavy, Gaston," said Glorieux, in his native tongue. "We must use care in removing it."

They both got hold of the handle and pulled with all their strength.

As the entire contents of the chest had been removed, as the reader knows, the box naturally offered no resistance.

In fact it shot out so quickly from under the bed that both Frenchmen lost their balance and tumbled over on the floor with a shock that could be felt through the frame house.

Jules Glorieux swore roundly as he picked himself up, while his companion, who had barked one shin, growled angrily in a subdued tone.

Joe, who had been lying in helpless silence since he was gagged and bound, chuckled to himself as he thought he saw the rascals' finish.

But he congratulated himself too soon.

Jules Glorieux was a man not easily turned from his purpose.

While he was afraid some of the inmates of the house had been aroused from their sleep by the noise, he was prepared to take the bull by the horns.

He knew that if the present enterprise failed the chance of his ever getting his hands on the treasure from the old stone house would be very small.

He had already informed himself that with the exception of the boy and the hired man, he had no one to fear but four females, and he did not anticipate that they would interfere with his plan.

The two rascals stood as silent as statues waiting to see the outcome of their mishap.

Presently their alert ears caught the sound of some one ascending the stairs in slippers.

Glorieux said something to Gaston in a whisper and the fellow glided to the door, ran his hand over the wood and shot the bolt he found there.

Then came a knock on the door and the voice of Mrs. Page was heard outside.

"Joe—Joe," she said. "What is the matter?"

Glorieux tore the gag from Joe's mouth and placed the knife at his throat.

"Ansair. Say dat you had ze nightmare and take ze tumble out of ze bed."

There was a murderous look in the Frenchman's eyes that intimidated the boy, and so he did as he was told.

"Are you in bed now, Joe?" Mrs. Page asked as she tried the door and found it bolted, somewhat to her surprise, for her son was not in the habit of securing the door against intrusion. "Did you bolt the door?"

"Yes, mother, I am in bed, and I bolted the door."

"Are you sure everything is all right, my son?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, mother," answered Joe, with the glittering knife pricking the skin of his throat and threatening instant death if he hesitated or equivocated in his replies.

It was a trying situation for Joe, but he couldn't help himself.

Jules Glorieux evidently meant business, and the risk was too great for the lad to venture to thwart him.

In this manner the crisis was passed and the rascals averted discovery, for Mrs. Page turned away as if satisfied, and her steps were soon heard descending the stairs.

"It is well," said Glorieux to his companion, in French; "gag him again."

The towel was replaced about Joe's mouth and the knife withdrawn from his throat.

"The money has been removed from this chest," continued the mysterious Frenchman, lifting one end of the box.

He hardly considered it necessary to lift the cover, but he did so to fully convince himself that the chest was empty.

"Now, where is the money? Ah, those boxes in the corner. This boy is a shrewd one. He has lost no time. He intends to ship the money to New York, it is likely, and there change it into the script of the country. We will save him the trouble, Gaston," with a wicked grin.

His companion nodded intelligently.

"You are sure these boxes contain the money?" he said.

"Lift one of them, and its weight ought to satisfy you," replied Glorieux. "They were concealed under these old clothes. I will take the risk that these boxes hold the money. We must carry them away at once."

"It will be a job," answered his associate.

"It shall not be so difficult. You get out on the ladder, then I will hand you one of the boxes on your shoulder. You will carry it down to the wagon in the road. When you come back you will take a second the same way. There are but four of them, so we will make the last trip together. A few hours of fast driving will carry us to the river where our sloop is moored. Once we have the boxes we will hoist the anchor and sail for the city, where we can slip them on the La Burgundie for Marseilles. She sails the day after to-morrow, so we have plenty of time to secure a stateroom."

This conversation was carried on in a low tone and, of course, in French, so it was impossible for Joe to either hear or understand a word that passed between the rascals.

The plan as outlined by Glorieux was immediately put into effect, and poor Joe was in despair when he saw the iron-bound boxes of gold, on which he had built such glorious air castles, removed from the room one by one until the last one had vanished out of the window and the mysterious Frenchman approached the bed for the last time.

There was a look of triumphant satisfaction in his eyes as he gazed down on the helpless youth.

"In one leetle moment I will say to you adieux. It is necessary that I feex you so dat you will not fall out of ze bed and give ze new alarm. I vill tie your feet to ze post, den you vill be—what you call him?—ah, oui, all to ze bon, I mean ze good."

The Frenchman uttered a wicked chuckle, and then proceeded to tie Joe's ankles securely to the bedpost.

"Now you are like ze cochon—ze peeg—when we take him to the market."

The rascal chuckled again.

"You have said adieu to ze monee, I hope, for you will not see it again, I assure you."

The mysterious Frenchman then made an elaborate and sarcastic bow to the unfortunate Joe, walked softly to the window and disappeared.

He did not take the trouble to close the window, or remove the ladder, but, picking up the last box of English gold, lifted it on his shoulder and started after his companion, who had already preceded him to the road.

Gaston was waiting for him.

He dumped the box into the wagon up against the other three and, mounting to the seat alongside his associate, the rascally pair whipped up the horse and drove off down the county road toward the Hudson River at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERIOUS FRENCHMAN IS UP AGAINST IT HARD.

It was two o'clock in the morning and Sam Parsons was standing at the window of his room looking out into the bare and silent road which ran close by the house.

Sam had gone to bed as usual at nine o'clock, but somehow or another he couldn't get to sleep.

That bag of English sovereigns which he had received from his chum Joe Page, and stowed away for safekeeping in an inside niche of the wide-open fireplace in his room, kept dancing through his head, setting the drowsy god Morpheus at defiance.

Sam had never owned five whole dollars in his life, and here he had suddenly become the possessor of the equivalent of \$4,840, every penny of which was honestly his own property.

Why, he was now worth almost, if not quite as much, as his own father, which was truly an astonishing state of affairs for him.

What boy under the circumstances would not have felt as Sam did that night?

There was one drawback, however, to his happiness, and that was, what course would his father take with reference to

that bag of money as soon as he learned it was absolutely the property of his son?

Wouldn't his parent demand its custody, and then use half or more of it to put up a model farmhouse he had long had in mind, but the realization of which he had been obliged to defer for want of the necessary funds?

Sam was of the opinion that the chances were 99 to 1 that his \$4,840 would go at once to his father's credit in the village bank, and that he wouldn't get a sou-markee to lay out on his own personal enjoyment.

So Sam made up his mind to say nothing to his folks at all about his windfall.

He had managed to secure permission to go to the metropolis next morning with his friend Joe Page, and this was an extraordinary concession on his father's part.

He had decided that after he got his money changed into bills he would open a savings bank account in Poughkeepsie, across the river, with \$4,800, and hide the book and the remaining \$40 in the chimney.

He could have a swell time out of that \$40, which would last him some time, and he would always have the satisfaction of knowing there was more to be had where that came from.

All this planning and calculation helped to keep sleep from Sam's eyes, and when he had settled everything to his own satisfaction he found he couldn't go to sleep any way.

He turned and twisted in bed, to no purpose, and when he finally heard the clock downstairs strike two, he got up and looked out of the window.

He didn't do that because he expected to see anything.

There wasn't much to be seen even in the daytime from his window, while at that hour of the morning the road and the country side were absolutely dead.

It was therefore with considerable surprise that Sam heard the rapid sound of wheels mingled with the chug, chug of a horse's hoof on the still night air.

He wondered if it was the village doctor on an emergency errand.

The vehicle soon came into view in the distance and Sam saw that it was an ordinary road wagon, with two men on the seat.

They seemed to be in a hurry, for the driver frequently applied the whip to the horse.

Before passing the Parsons farmhouse the wagon had to cross a short bridge which spanned a narrow but rather deep creek.

Just as the vehicle struck the bridge, after rushing down an incline, the rear right-hand wheel came off and the wagon dipped with a crash, as if heavily loaded at that end, and Sam heard a succession of heavy smashes, as of weighty articles striking the bridge, and then a similar number of splashes, as if the said articles had continued their flight into the water.

Sam could also hear loud exclamations from the men, and saw the driver pull in the horse.

Both men dismounted and walked rapidly back to the bridge, where they stood by the rail and looked over into the stream.

"Geé whiz!" exclaimed Sam. "Whatever they had in the wagon has been dumped into the water. They'll have a nice time recovering it, for the water is all of eight feet deep there.

The stuff must be heavy from the noise it made on the bridge, so the chances are they'll not be able to get it out of the stream without ropes and a stout windlass. At any rate they're stuck for the balance of the night for fair."

Sam saw one of the men pick up the wheel which had caused all the trouble and roll it up to the wagon, then the pair held a consultation.

One of them, whose personal appearance interested Sam greatly, for he put him in mind of the mysterious Frenchman, gesticulated wildly.

"We've got stout ropes and a winch in the barn," said Sam to himself. "I've a great mind to dress myself, go down and see if I can't arrange a deal with those chaps. I'd just as soon earn another dollar as not."

As the boy never felt more wideawake in his life, he decided to carry out his idea.

He got into his clothes in short order, but instead of leaving the house by the front door and walking down the road, he left it by the kitchen door, and cut across a bit of pasture which would land him at the corner of the bridge.

The line of heavy bushes growing beside the road fence prevented the men from observing his approach and, of course, he couldn't see them any better.

The loud and excited voice of one of the individuals, however, served to guide the boy right to the part of the fence outside of which they were standing.

Although Sam was not afraid to show himself, still he concluded to take a sight at them first.

Nothing like being on the safe side any way.

So Sam, when he reached the bushes, pushed his head through with as much caution as if he expected to find an enemy on the other side of the fence.

The moment his eyes took in the man who was doing the talking he was glad he had not rushed things.

It was for a fact the mysterious Frenchman.

And his companion was another, although not at all mysterious-looking.

Monsieur Jules Glorieux was jabbering away to beat the band, and gesticulating like a monkey on a hot stove.

Sam at once lost all desire of proffering the services of the rope and winch at the barn.

Had he been able to understand French he would have learned something that must have opened his eyes; but as any other language than English was as pure Greek to him, their conversation was quite lost upon him.

He wondered where the man of mystery had picked up his companion, and why they were driving up the road at race-horse speed at that hour in the morning.

He also wondered what was the character of the freight they had lost in the creek.

"It seems to be important, whatever it is," he said to himself, "for Monsoo Glorieux, of Bordeaux, looks as if he wanted to tear his hair out by the roots."

In good truth, the mysterious Frenchman was acting as if he was a candidate for a madhouse.

And with good reason, as the reader will guess, for the four iron-bound boxes of English sovereigns they had taken such risk and trouble to abstract from Joe Page's chamber, were now resting out of sight in the creek, and Jules Glorieux could see no immediate chance of recovering them.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAM GETS OUT OF A PICKLE.

The two Frenchmen went down to the water's edge and tried to make out where the boxes lay, but the water was too deep and dark, especially at that hour, for them to see anything in the depths of the creek.

It was clear to the watchful Sam that they were at their wits' end.

Finally they gave the problem up and returned to the wagon, the rear axle of which they found to be fractured.

They put the wheel into the forward part of the vehicle, and mounting to the seat drove over slowly toward the village of Highland, four miles distant.

"They'll be back in a few hours, I dare say," said Sam to himself, as he watched them depart. "I'd give something to know what those boxes contain. They are heavy, all right. I wouldn't be surprised if they had stolen them from some place. That Jules Glorieux, of Bordeaux, seems a sort of suspicious character to me. At any rate he tried to do Joe out of that treasure chest yesterday afternoon. Had the nerve to draw a revolver on us. We could have him arrested and put in the lock-up for that. Well, I'm coming down here the first thing after I get up to see if I can get a glimpse of those boxes."

Thus speaking, Sam started back for the house.

Suddenly he stopped short as if a startling idea had struck him.

"How gracious!" he exclaimed. "I wonder if those rascals made a visit to the Page house, and got away with Joe's money? He told me he was going to box it up in four small starch boxes so it could be the more easily handled for shipment to New York this forenoon. The wagon came up the road from the direction of Joe's place. They were driving at breakneck speed at a suspiciously early hour and making for Highland. What whiz! It looks as if there was something wrong, for a fact. I've a great mind to run over to the Page farm, wake Joe up and tell him what I've seen."

Sam stood a few moments in an undecided way.

There might be nothing in the idea after all, and Joe would laugh him the laugh for coming over at that hour in the morning.

For the circumstances were sufficiently suspicious to demand action.

The mysterious Frenchman had clearly shown that his object in coming to that part of the county was to get possession

of the treasure chest hidden in the foundation of the old stone house.

When he discovered that the boys had found the chest, and they had naturally refused to let him have it, he had doubtless spotted the place they had taken it to and then made his plans to steal it that morning.

That's the way Sam argued and, as the reader knows, he was right.

"He brought that other chap to help him do the business," mused Sam, more and more convinced that he was on the right track. "They found that the money had been removed from the chest and nailed up in the starch boxes, so they carried off the boxes. No doubt they worked the game slick enough to avoid discovery. Well, I'm going over to Joe's, anyway. If the money is safe there'll be no harm done."

Having decided the matter, he pushed his way through the bushes, jumped the fence and started down the road toward the Page property.

He walked fast, and fifteen minutes later he was marching up the path that led to the front door.

"Everything is quiet around here," mused Sam, beginning to think he was wrong in his surmises after all. "It seems to me if those chaps had been here they must have awoken somebody in the house. It's no fool job to carry off several heavy boxes without being detected in the act. I guess I've made a donkey of myself, coming over here."

He stopped at the foot of the porch steps and scratched his head.

To pound on the door and arouse the Page family, only to find out that nothing had happened, would make him look foolish, and Sam dreaded holding himself up to ridicule.

"I won't knock," he decided. "I'll go around on the side and fire pebbles at Joe's window. It won't do any harm to wake him up. If he chooses to give me the merry ha-ha, why, I guess I can stand it."

So he marched around to the ell, in the second story of which was Joe's room.

As he turned the corner the first thing he saw was the ladder standing under Joe's window, which was open to its widest extent.

"Hopping toads! That doesn't look right," he cried, coming to a pause and staring hard at the ladder and the open window. "Joe wouldn't do anything like that—a clear invitation to any tramp in the neighborhood to walk into the house—even if he didn't have a dollar in the house. He would certainly be crazy to stand a ladder under his window in this fashion with nearly \$100,000 in his room, or at least somewhere in the house. I am sure there has been something doing here, all right, and I'm going to climb that ladder and wake Joe up."

Sam didn't lose a moment making his way up the rungs, and inside of a minute he had his head inside of the window.

"Joe, Joe!" he cried, "wake up!"

There was a movement on the bed, and Joe Page, bound and gagged as he was, sat up.

He could not get out of bed, as his ankles were tied tight to the bedpost.

As it was rather dark in the room, the moon having swung around, Sam did not at first notice his chum's predicament.

He saw that he was awake, however, and that was enough for him.

"Say, old man," he said, "what is this ladder doing under your window at this hour? Looks as if thieves had been around. Is your money all right?"

Joe couldn't reply on account of the towel about his mouth, but he tried to attract Sam's attention to his helpless condition.

"What's the matter with you?" continued Sam, rather astonished at the dumbness of his friend. "Haven't you woke up enough to use your tongue?"

Still no answer from Joe—only a succession of odd jerks of the head and body.

"Oh, come now, you know it's me. What are you giving me that dumb show for? What have you got around your face, anyway? A towel?" as he looked more keenly. "Got a toothache, eh? That's why you don't open your mouth. Well, you've my sympathy. A toothache is about the worst—hello! what the dickens have you around your arms and chest?"

Sam stepped into the room and walked up to Joe.

"Why, you're bound up and gagged, and you're tied to the bed. My gracious! what's happened?" as he tore the towel from Joe's face. "Has that mysterious Frenchman been here and got away with your money?"

"Yes, yes!" gasped Joe. "He has been here with another man, and they've taken the four boxes with every coin. Did you ever hear of such a thing?" said Joe, the tears coming

into his eyes. "Robbed by that villain! Help me to get free, will you?"

"Sure I will," replied Sam. "Go on and tell me all about it." And while Sam labored to untie the knots, Joe told him the whole story of the visit paid him by Jules Glorieux and his companion, and how they had stolen the four boxes containing the English sovereigns.

Sam had him free before the story was finished, and Joe wound up his mournful tale while hurriedly dressing himself.

"We must wake up John, get a horse put to the wagon and chase those rascals. It's the only thing I can do. I've no doubt they went toward the river. We may find them at Highland waiting for an early train," said Joe, feverishly. "But tell me," he added, almost wonderingly, "how is it you came over here at this early hour? It is just three o'clock."

"I came over here because I got an idea into my head that something was wrong."

"How could you get such an idea as that?" asked Joe, in some astonishment. "Had a bad dream?"

"No. The fact is, I haven't been asleep to-night, and that's the luckiest thing for you that ever happened."

"You haven't been to sleep?" cried Joe.

"Nary a wink."

"Why, how was that?"

"Oh, I was too excited over that five thousand you gave me. I went to bed at nine, but when the clock struck two I was still awake. I got up and looked out of my window, and what do you think I saw?"

"How could I guess what you saw?"

"I saw a horse and wagon coming at a red-hot pace down the road from this direction. There were two men on the seat."

"That must have been the wagon that was carrying off the boxes, and the two Frenchmen."

"That's right, it was," nodded Sam.

"Did you recognize Jules Glorieux?"

"Of Bordeaux?" grinned Sam. "Bet your life I did."

"They were going toward the Hudson, as I thought."

"As hard as they could put."

"They must be there by this time," said Joe, dolefully.

"Perhaps they are; but the boxes of sovereigns aren't with them."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean the wagon met with an accident at the bridge near our place."

"An accident?"

"Exactly. One of the hind wheels came off suddenly, and those boxes of money, every one of them, tumbled over into the creek."

"What!" almost shouted Joe. "Tumbled into the creek?"

"That's what they did, and they're there at this moment. All we've got to do is to go down there and fish them out."

"Sam Parsons, are you telling me the truth, or is this one of your jokes?"

"Nary joke. It's the solemn truth. That's what caused me to come over here. Those boxes having been in the hands of the mysterious Frenchman, who left us yesterday afternoon with a threat on his lips, raised my suspicions, and I came here to see if he and his companion had paid you a night visit for the purpose of getting possession of that money. I was right, and I'm glad I came over."

"If the boxes are in the creek, as you say, we'll get them out somehow, you may depend on that," returned Joe, enthusiastically. "We must look out for those Frenchmen. They are sure to return as soon as they can with ropes and other means to try and recover the boxes. It's up to us to get ahead of them."

"If I was you, I'd send for the constable and have those chaps arrested on the charge of burglary as soon as they showed up at the creek."

"That's just what I mean to do."

"I'll go for him if you want me to," volunteered his chum.

"No. I'm going to wake John up now and send him."

"The four of us ought to be able to capture those monsoos. After we have them safe in the lock-up we can take our time fishing up the boxes."

"We'll need to rig a lift of some kind to raise them out of the bed of the creek."

"We've got a good winch at our place and plenty of rope. All we'll have to do is to rig up a stout pole with a block at the end of it, through which we'll pass a rope. Then we can take turns diving down to attach a sling around the boxes, one at a time."

"You've got it down fine, Sam. That's the way we'll do. Now for John."

Joe left the room to arouse the hired man, leaving Sam to complete in his mind his plans for getting the boxes of money out of the creek.

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS FRENCHMAN AND HIS COMPANION.

At sunrise Joe Page, Sam Parsons, John Jones and Constable Snodgrass were concealed in the shrubbery near the creek bridge, waiting for the two Frenchmen to show up.

They had not been there more than fifteen minutes before they heard the sound of wheels come from the direction of Highland.

"I'll bet that's them," said Sam, in some excitement.

The others said nothing, but waited, Jones drawing out the Frenchman's revolver to intimidate the rascals when they came up.

"This is a dandy ambuscade," grinned Sam. "We'll give those chaps the surprise of their lives."

Pretty soon the vehicle hove in sight and, sure enough, the two foreigners were on the seat.

Joe, who was peeping down the road, announced the fact.

The wagon drew up nearly opposite them; then the Frenchmen got out, and the first thing they did was to scramble down the bank of the creek to look into the water for some sign of the boxes.

As the water was clear, they could now see them quite plainly eight feet below the surface.

Returning to the wagon, they busied themselves getting out ropes, with a pole and hoisting tackle which they had brought from their sloop anchored in the Hudson.

They intended to rush things, for they couldn't tell when, as they figured it, Joe would be discovered bound and gagged in bed and a pursuit started.

While they were thus occupied the constable and John Jones, followed by the two boys, quietly made their appearance from the shrubbery.

"Throw up your hands," ordered Constable Snodgrass, producing his revolver.

"Sacre!" exclaimed Jules Glorieux, starting back in surprise.

His companion started to draw a revolver, but Jones stepped up and shoved his, at full cock, into his face.

"Surrender, you rascal. I've got the drop on you," thundered the hired man.

"By gar! Dees is von outrage," cried the mysterious Frenchman, glaring at the constable. "I demand dat you give an explanasheon."

"I place you both under arrest," said Constable Snodgrass.

"Comment!" (what!) exclaimed Glorieux. "You arrest us?"

"I do—on the charge of burglary."

"Burglaree! Sare, you make one grand mistake."

"Well, I shall take you before the squire, and if I have made a mistake he will discharge you from custody," replied the village officer.

"But, sare, I have no desire to go before ze—what you call him—squire."

"Sorry, monsoo, but I shall have to take you, whether you like it or not. Hold out your hands," and the constable took a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

Jules Glorieux put up a big kick against the steel wristlets, but he had to give in, for the officer was inexorable.

His companion's hands were bound with a rope.

They were forced to get into the wagon, all hands followed, and John Jones drove the rig into the village, where the Frenchmen were locked up, pending their examination before the justice.

"Well, we've got them, all right," grinned Sam. "There's evidence enough against them to send them to the county seat for trial, so they won't bother us any more."

"We might as well go home for breakfast now," said Joe. "We'll have to walk, for Mr. Snodgrass has taken charge of the Frenchmen's outfit. That tackle in the wagon would be just the thing to haul those boxes up with."

"Then we must persuade Snodgrass to let us have the use of it," said Sam.

"Well, we won't be able to make a move until after Squire Dalton has had these chaps before him, for you and I will be obliged to give our testimony at the examination," replied Joe.

"I guess the boxes won't walk off, and the water won't hurt the gold," said Sam. "It's a good thing you put plenty of iron bands around them, otherwise they'd have broken open and spilled some of their valuable contents."

"They'd have got smashed more or less, anyway, only each

landed in a separate spot in the sand," answered Joe. "That saved them."

Joe had a stirring story to tell his mother and sisters when he got home for breakfast, and they were greatly startled.

He had to go into all the particulars about the movements of the mysterious Frenchman from the time he had first seen the light in the stone house.

"Were you not dreadfully frightened when that man held the knife at your throat, Joe?" asked Mildred, with a shudder.

"Well, I didn't feel very good," he replied.

"I am so thankful I came right downstairs without making a fuss because the door was locked," said his mother. "It's a great mercy that he did not kill you, my son."

"I don't think he had any intention of going as far as that, mother; but he's a desperate kind of chap, just the same."

"Would you like to go to the village and be present at the examination?" asked Joe. "Squire Dalton will hold court at ten o'clock."

Mildred was the only one who cared to go. She was curious to look at the mysterious Frenchman and his associate.

News of the arrest of the two desperate Frenchmen who had broken into the Page farmhouse during the night circulated with great rapidity throughout the village of Pembroke, and as a consequence a big crowd of the villagers, both male and female, gathered outside Squire Dalton's office some time before the hour set for the examination of the prisoners.

When John Jones and the two boys appeared they were bombarded with questions, but they declined to say a word on the subject till they went on the stand to give their sworn testimony.

At length the squire appeared and took his seat, the witnesses were admitted and took chairs provided for them, and then as many of the outsiders crowded into the small room as could find space to stand.

The prisoners were led in by the constable and the proceedings began.

The Frenchmen were charged with housebreaking, and both pleaded not guilty.

Joe was the star witness against them.

He was duly sworn, and then told his story in a cool, straightforward manner.

"What was in these boxes that you accuse the prisoners of stealing?" asked the justice.

"Valuable property belonging to me," replied Joe, not caring to confess the exact nature of their contents as long as the boxes were at the bottom of the creek.

"Were these boxes found in the prisoners' possession?"

"No, sir."

"Then I'm afraid the charge of robbery won't hold unless your statement can be corroborated," said the squire.

"Sam Parsons is ready to testify that he saw the boxes in possession of these Frenchmen at two o'clock this morning, shortly after the robbery took place."

"Where are the boxes now?"

"At the bottom of Goose Creek, alongside of the bridge."

"How came they to be there?"

"These men were carrying them toward the Hudson in a light wagon; which broke down at the bridge, and the boxes fell out into the creek."

"Constable Snodgrass, if I find that the evidence is sufficient to warrant me in remanding the prisoners, you will see that these boxes are produced at their trial," said Justice Dalton.

Joe looked rather blue at those words.

The custody of the boxes would be taken out of his hands entirely for some little time, and he could not tell what might happen to them during that interval.

The constable would be responsible for them, of course, and Joe knew that he was a thoroughly conscientious man; but if even one of them should be accidentally lost, Mr. Snodgrass would never be able to make its value good.

The boy therefore decided, while Sam was giving his evidence, that he would take the constable into his confidence in respect to the actual nature of the contents of the boxes, and get him to send them to the village bank for safekeeping until it should be necessary to produce them at the trial, when no doubt he would be obliged, anyway, to swear to the value of the boxes.

At the close of the testimony against them the prisoners were asked if they had anything to say, but both declined to make any other defense than a general denial of the charge.

Justice Dalton decided to hold the prisoners for trial, and a commitment was made out.

Constable Snodgrass took them that afternoon to the county seat and turned them over to the warden of the jail.

The constable allowed the boys to take the Frenchmen's rig, just as it stood, for the purpose of recovering the boxes from the creek and bringing them to his house in the village.

After dinner the boys, assisted by John Jones, started in to raise the money boxes.

Inside of an hour they had them out of the creek and in the wagon.

"It's tough," remarked Sam, "that we've got to turn these over to Snodgrass, isn't it? Are you going to tell him they're full of money?"

"I'll have to."

"He'll want to know how you got all that gold."

"We'll give him the whole story about our finding the treasure under the old stone house, pledge him to secrecy, and then get him to deposit the boxes in the village bank. That's the only way out of the difficulty that I can see."

And so that plan was duly and successfully carried out.

CHAPTER X.

JOE'S BUSINESS SCHEME.

"Well," said Sam Parsons, as he and Joe Page sat on the veranda of the Page farmhouse on the following night, "I suppose our trip to New York is indefinitely postponed."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Joe. "You've got a matter of five thousand dollars worth of English gold to change into United States bank bills, and the sooner you do it the sooner you'll feel like an American capitalist."

"That's right," admitted Sam.

"You haven't told your folks about that money?"

"No. I don't feel like giving it up, for that is what I'd have to do if my father knew I had it."

"He'd only take charge of it as your natural guardian to prevent you from making a bad use of it."

"That's right," grinned Sam, "but I'd never see it again, just the same."

"Why not? You'd get it when you reached twenty-one with the advantage of five years' interest."

"Don't you believe it. That money would go into the family pocketbook and would stay there. I know my old man better than you do."

"Well, what are you going to do with the money when you get it changed into bills?"

"I'm going to put it into a savings bank in Poughkeepsie myself. Then I'll be able to keep a line on it. I'm sick of farming. If I should see a chance to go into some kind of business that would suit me better, I'd have the money to back myself—see?"

"I see, but I'm afraid the possession of so much money would be a temptation for you to embark in schemes that might in the end land you on your uppers."

"Do you take me for a chump?"

"No, I hope not, Sam. I'm only giving you a slight warning. Where did you hide that bag of sovereigns—in your trunk?"

"No. I put it in a niche inside that wide chimney in my room. If the house was to take fire and burn down, the chimney would stand and the money would be as secure as if in a safe."

"Well, that's one of the advantages of those wide, solidly built chimneys of our granddaddies. That house you live in must be one of the old guard."

"It was built over eighty years ago."

"Why don't your father tear it down and put up a new one?"

"He would if he got his fingers on my five thousand dollars."

"He could put up a good house for half that money."

"I suppose when your boxes of sovereigns are released you will make a model farm of your place here. You could easily build a place that would make Squire Dalton's place look like thirty cents. That's what I would do if I was in your shoes."

"The first thing I'm going to do with that money, Sam, is to give you another bag of it for what you did for me yesterday morning."

"Another five thousand dollars!" gasped Sam.

"Yes. I might never have recovered those boxes but for you. I want you to understand that I am grateful to you. I certainly would have remained bound and gagged at least three hours longer if you hadn't come over here and released me."

"Ho! I didn't expect any pay for that. We're chums, aren't we? Well, I'd expect you to do the same thing for me if you thought anything was wrong in my direction."

"And I'd do it, Sam," replied Joe, promptly. "Five thousand is little enough by way of a present for saving my money boxes, and so that's what you'll get. You can hand your father over half of it, if you want to, to build a new house."

"I'd do it, if he wouldn't insist on getting the other money."

"Well, Joe, I'll tell you how you can find use for that money in a way that I think would suit you."

"How?"

"By going into a business partnership with me."

"A business partnership with you!" exclaimed Sam, in surprise.

"Yes. I've been talking the matter over with my mother, and she approves of the project."

"Does she? Then it must be a good one."

"I think it is. I've had the idea in my mind for nearly a year."

"What is it?"

"The produce commission business in New York."

"Gee! that isn't bad. We both know something about that."

"We only know it from the producer's point of view in a practical sense; but I picked up the whole theory of the commission end from a smart young chap who boarded with us a couple of weeks last summer. As he saw that I was interested in the business, he gave me points to burn, and I haven't forgotten a single one. Now that I shall be able to handle a good bit of money, I'm going into it. Why, with the capital I'll have I'll be able to make the fur fly."

"Any business you were in would suit me to the queen's taste," said Sam, enthusiastically. "I'd like you for a partner first rate. I wouldn't be afraid of getting skinned out of my cash. Come, now, tell me something about the commission end."

Joe at once explained to him how the business was conducted in New York.

The farmers of New Jersey and certain counties of New York sent their produce consigned to different commission houses located in the wholesale provision district west of Hudson street and below Fourteenth street, New York City.

These selling agents in turn disposed of the consignments to wholesale dealers in lots to suit at the best prices they could get, and rendered statements of the transactions to the farmers.

The men who managed the New York end of the business in the interest of the country producers were supposed to be content with a straight commission for their services.

That was a simple and straightforward method of doing the business.

The young man who had boarded at the Page farmhouse during the early half of the preceding September assured Joe that he knew, from personal experience, that the farmers, who were compelled to trust the commission people, were the victims of a systematic bunco game.

"He told me that the producers got it in the neck all the time," said Joe.

"How do they?" asked Sam, much interested.

"He says the commission men figure up all kinds of charges against the consignments, in addition to their regular commission, and that the balance rendered in favor of their customers looks very dizzy after the head bookkeeper has footed it up."

"Is that a fact?"

"It is, if Dickson—that was the name of our boarder—told the truth."

"Why, that's a swindle," cried Sam, indignantly.

"That's what it looks like. I think there is some truth in what he told me, for I have heard a number of farmers up this way complain of the way they had been treated by the commission houses of New York. I know of farmers who let lots of fruit and vegetables go to waste because they said it didn't pay to ship it to the city for sale."

"Gee! that's fierce. But I should think a farmer would shake a commission man after getting one or two hard deals from him and try another."

"He does, naturally, but it doesn't help him any."

"Why not?"

"Because Dickson told me that the chief commission houses are banded together and every one worked along the same lines. The producer is up against the same scale of charges, no matter what house he favors with his stuff, and, in addition, is kept out of his money for an indefinite time."

"No wonder so many farmers cry poverty," said Sam. "I've heard my father squeal about the little profit there is in his fruit when he sends it to market."

"Now, Sam, I propose to start in the commission business on strictly an honest basis. Dickson said there was a good profit on a flat commission of ten per cent. Of course, there are sometimes charges, but these are the exception, not the rule, when the country products are shipped in proper shape. If a farmer is careless in this respect he is bound to be a sufferer, and nobody is then to blame but himself."

"That's right," nodded Sam.

"We'll open an office in the right location, or as near it as we can find a suitable place. Then we'll take turns drumming up the farmers in different sections, assuring them of fair treatment. As soon as business begins to come our way we'll canvass the retail dealers in the city, the larger ones personally and the small fry by circulars. Then, when things get fairly started, we'll try for the hotels—the smaller ones first, and so on up the ladder. In fact, I don't mean to stop at the ordinary produce business. I'm going into the canned industry as well. With my capital I'll be able to handle large consignments of goods—outbid many houses in our line whose capital is either limited or tied up. Cash talks every day in the week. If you've got the money to pay down on the nail the stuff comes your way every time. I shall be able to make contracts with steamship companies and other large interests and do a swell business. In fact, that is what I'm out for. The country produce will be the opening wedge. If through honest dealing and quick returns we can get control of a large part of the farmers' business, we'll be able to establish a fine trade, and once we have secured the confidence of the producers we'll be able to hold it against all comers. What do you think of it, Sam?"

"Fine!" cried his chum, enthusiastically. "When are you going to start in?"

"Right away, if you don't mind letting me use your five thousand dollars to set the ball rolling until I can get control of my own funds."

"Let you use it? Well, say, just freeze on to every cent of it. I'm with you in this thing from the ground floor up."

"You'll never regret it, Sam. It will be a start in life for you as well as for myself. But, remember, it will be a case of hustle from the beginning. You can't expect to sit in an office and look for things to come your way. We'll have to get out and work like beavers early and late. One of these days, when we've built up the business, we'll be able to take things easier. But that won't be for a long time."

"I'll hustle, bet your life. Anything is better than everyday farming in New York State. I've had all I want of it, and I guess you know as well as I that there is no future in it."

"Well, it's after nine o'clock, Sam. Time you were going home. Fetch over that bag of sovereigns by eight in the morning. We'll take the 9:10 West Shore train at Highland for Weehawken."

The boys parted for the night, Sam departing with his head full of visions of the future, and feeling as if he had suddenly become a full-grown man.

CHAPTER XI.

PAGE & PARSONS, COMMISSION MERCHANTS.

When the boys reached lower Broadway next morning after eleven o'clock Joe led the way to a well-known trust and safe deposit company, to which he had been recommended by the president of the village bank.

He sent in his letter of introduction to the president and was admitted to that gentleman's private office.

To him Joe told his story of the finding of the twenty thousand pounds of old English sovereigns under the foundation of the old stone house on his mother's property.

He recited the adventures he had had with the mysterious Frenchman, who had come all the way from France, by his own account, with a clue to the buried treasure, but had failed to locate it.

The president was very much interested in his story.

"Now," said Joe, "I have here a sample of the treasure, one of the bags which I gave my chum before I boxed the rest up. It contains one thousand pounds. I want to exchange that for American money. Then, as soon as the authorities release the four boxes after the trial of the two Frenchmen, I want to sell the other nineteen thousand pounds. Now will you undertake to do this for me for a suitable compensation?"

The president said the company would do that for him if the gold was genuine.

"This bag is an exact sample of the others, for my chum and myself have handled every coin when counting it."

The president examined the money closely and was satisfied it was the real thing.

"Wasn't there any papers to give a clue to the original owners of this gold?" asked the gentleman.

"No," answered Joe. "There was not a thing in the chest but the twenty bags, each one carefully tied at the mouth just as this one is."

"And it was found on your mother's property?"

"Yes, sir. I have brought a note to that effect from her," and the boy showed it to the president of the trust company. The gentleman sent the bag outside to the cashier to count it and compute its exact value in American money.

When this formality had been completed, Joe was paid about forty-eight hundred dollars in bills, and took his departure, promising to call later with the rest of the English money.

After a good lunch the two boys started for the wholesale provision district of the city to look the ground of their proposed business venture well over.

They found a store for rent in the heart of the district, with the office partition standing, and Joe hired it at once for a year, with the privilege of renewal at the same rent.

He then gave an order to a sign painter for a board sign to go over the door.

"Page & Parsons, Commission Merchants, will look fine, you bet your life," said Sam, enthusiastically, as they left the painter's shop.

"It is the first step we are taking on our road to success," replied Joe, as they started across town toward Broadway. "Before we make our next move we might as well register at the Sinclair House, for we shan't leave the city for two or three days."

"That'll suit me all right," replied his companion, with a pleased chuckle.

So they went straight to that hotel and engaged a room.

"Now, Sam," said Joe, as they started uptown along Broadway to take in a few sights of the metropolis, "the next thing we'll have to do—and it is a matter requiring considerable judgment, is to secure a competent and trustworthy man to help us launch this business of ours properly. We want a man with practical experience in the produce commission line—a man who can run the city end of the concern while we are out in the country drumming up trade."

"That's right," nodded Sam. "How are you going to get him?"

"I'm going to put an advertisement in one of the big dailies stating just what we want, and then it will be up to us to pick out the right man. We've got to be very careful in making our selection, for a whole lot depends on our choice. We can't rely altogether on references, for nearly every applicant for the position will be prepared to furnish a bunch of apparently gilt-edged ones. We must size our man up from his shoes to his hat, take particular note of his manner in dealing with us, and try to form a correct opinion of his honesty and business ability. You see, a great many sharp persons will be inclined to take advantage of the fact that we are boys and fair game for them. If we make the mistake of employing one of these kind of chaps we'll be apt to suffer for it."

Sam agreed with his chum that the problem was a serious one.

Joe put his advertisement in the Herald, then they walked up Sixth avenue to Central Park and spent an hour there.

They took a Broadway car back to their hotel, had dinner, and afterward went to the theater.

They got a number of answers next morning to their advertisement, one of them from a man who said he had been in the produce commission business several years, but had been forced out of it because, as the boys learned at the interview Joe arranged with him, he had tried to run the business on the very lines the two boys contemplated themselves.

"I did very well at the start," he went on to say, "for the farmers were looking for a square man to do business with; but when the other commission men saw how things were going they combined to drive me out of the district. I was a thorn in their sides, because I was steadily making inroads on their trade. They sent out representatives to try and cut off my customers; they cut down their commissions to the farmers and made all kinds of temporary concessions in order to wipe me out. Finally they resorted to many underhand devices that hurt me greatly. In the end they won out and I had to retire from business."

His name was William Black, and his manner and conversation made a favorable impression on both boys.

Joe had a long talk with him, and was convinced he was in every respect a desirable person to engage.

He promised to give the lads the full benefit of his experience in the business and to take as much interest in its development as though it were his own.

When he found the boys proposed to run matters on the same lines as he had tried to do himself he expressed a strong doubt of their success; but Joe told him they would have

capital to burn, and that they intended to burn a good bit of it, if necessary, to force themselves to the front and fight the opposition.

"We're going to win out, too, Mr. Black," said Joe, in a decided tone. "Sam and I are hustlers and fighters from the basement up. We're young, it is true, but the opposition will find themselves badly fooled if they fancy we're going to be easy marks. We will have to depend on your experience to a considerable extent at the outset, and we hope you will do the best you can in our interests."

"I certainly shall," replied Mr. Black.

"At any rate, this will give you the chance to get back at the men who did you up. That ought to be some satisfaction, at any rate. With our capital and energy, backed up with your experience, we propose to make things hum in the produce district. If you prove satisfactory, as we think you will, you'll find that Sam and I will do the right thing by you."

Mr. Black was engaged, and he started at once to get things under way.

He looked after all the necessary details, made suggestions that the young firm adopted without question, and soon proved they had made no mistake in hiring him.

"He's all to the mustard," said Sam, as they were preparing to return to Pembroke to make their final arrangements for an indefinite absence from their homes.

"He's a good, conscientious man, thoroughly up in the business, and will handle all the stuff we can drum up in first-class shape. We couldn't have landed a better man if we'd tried for a month."

"That's right," replied Sam. "We were dead lucky to get him."

The boys spent only a day or two at their homes, and then started out to hustle among the farmers.

It was arranged between them that Sam should work up agreements among the produce and fruit growers of Ulster, Orange and Rockland counties of New York State, while Joe devoted his energies to the farmers of New Jersey.

It was a new experience for the two lads, but they had pluck, energy and ambition to burn, and both felt confident that they had started upon the road to success.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESCUE ON THE LAKE.

Before he started to work up the New Jersey trade, Joe crossed the river and took a car down to his place of business, on Fourteenth street, west.

Mr. Black was in the office, reading a newspaper.

He was all ready to attend to business, but there was nothing doing as yet.

But, of course, this state of inaction was not expected to last very long.

He confidently looked to see consignments of produce and fruits arrive in a few days, just as soon as the young proprietors of the business secured a few patrons.

Joe only stopped a short time, just long enough to have a talk with his manager-bookkeeper, and then he started for the Desbrosses street ferry and was soon in Jersey City, where he took a train for the point he intended to begin operations.

Both of the young partners of the firm of Page & Parsons met with success from the very start.

Joe's proposition of a flat ten per cent. commission, with no bogus charges tacked on to reduce the farmer's profits, and a ten-day settlement, captured the producer off-hand, and he readily agreed to sign an agreement to send all his stuff to the new firm.

Most of the farmers that the boys first talked into sending introductory consignments to Page & Parsons were inclined to think this new deal they were promised was too good to be true.

They soon discovered that the house which promised them a "square deal" was keeping its word to the letter, and naturally they were so pleased that they made the fact public, and many producers that the boys had been unable to call on in their neighborhood tried the experiment also of sending their stuff to the new commission house.

The result was that the old commission men began to notice a steady drop off in their business, and, looking around to discover the cause of this, they saw that the firm of Page & Parsons, which had but lately invaded the district, was

getting business that by right, they argued, should come to them.

As this state of things got worse instead of better as the boys covered more ground, the opposition people came together to see what could be done to remedy the evil.

The first thing they did was to send agents into the country to head off Joe and Sam, as well as to counteract the success they had already achieved.

The boys were prepared for some such demonstration, and they began to tell the farmers that they might expect to hear from the representatives of their late commission men, and advised them to pay no attention to wily promises of reform on the part of the old houses as long as they were getting their full ninety per cent. returns on a ten-day basis.

The farmers who had already done business with Page & Parsons were satisfied with the treatment they were now receiving, and the agents of the other commission houses found it a difficult job to make any of them return to the old fold.

The fruit season was now commencing, and the very best of the early products found their way to the new house, so that the wholesalers and stewards of the big hotels had to come and see Mr. Black if they wanted any of this stuff, which, as a matter of course, they did.

There was one big and influential fruit grower in New Jersey that Joe tried to reach, but it was some little time before he was able to secure an interview.

On account of his trade the old commission men had been in the habit of treating him pretty decently—each and every one of them that enjoyed the privilege of handling consignments from his great farm and orchards were only too eager to try and retain his good will.

As soon as their early fruit business began to suffer from the encroachments made by Sam and Joe, the commission men who handled Mr. Walton's fruit got together and dispatched one of their brightest agents to fill his head full of distrust for any proposition submitted to him by Page & Parsons.

Unfortunately this man reached his ear before Joe was able to make his acquaintance, and the result was that the bright boy got a cool reception and a flat refusal of business when he did appear with a blank agreement to which he had hoped to secure Walton's signature.

This was Joe's first important setback, and he retired feeling much disappointed.

He recognized that the opposition had got in ahead of him and that their representative had lied about him; but he couldn't do anything, and had to accept his first signal defeat with the best grace possible.

That, however, was not the worst of it. Mr. Walton's neighbors, having great respect for his judgment, followed his lead in the matter of commission houses as in other matters, and Joe found his work cut out for him in that section of New Jersey.

It was a big card for the other houses to be able to control the Walton fruit, for it had a standing among the wholesale trade that put all similar fruit more or less in the shade with the higher class of customers.

Walton fruit fetched the highest prices and sold right off the reel on its arrival in New York.

The opposition therefore scored an important point against Page & Parsons when they cut the new firm out of the Walton business.

Joe was a bit discouraged to find that he could not secure even a single customer in the Walton locality, where the best fruit would come from as the season advanced.

"I hate to give the fight up here," he said to himself, "but I've done the very best I could in this locality and I can't make the least headway."

He was just coming away from the last fruit farm on his list in that neighborhood, after receiving the usual turn-down.

He started down the road on his bicycle toward the village where he was stopping while he canvassed the district.

He had to pass the Walton farm at the point where a lake of some size bordered the road.

As he drew near this body of water, which was ruffled by a stiff afternoon wind, he noticed a pretty little sailboat, in which was a lovely miss of perhaps fifteen and a well-dressed boy a year older.

The boy was steering the boat, and from the actions of the small craft it struck Joe, who knew something about boat sailing, that the lad was a novice in the art of handling a sailboat.

He kept his eye on the craft as he rode along.

"That chap knows as much about sailing a boat as a donkey

does about dancing. Even if he did know something, it was rash of him to put out on the lake in this wind, especially with that girl for a passenger. I shouldn't be at all surprised to see him capsize any moment."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before a sudden flaw struck the sail.

Not being a skillful boatman, the boy was wholly unprepared for it, and the boat upset.

Struggling in terror and confusion, the lad struck out for the nearest shore, leaving the screaming girl to her fate.

She could not swim, and the suddenness of the catastrophe had unnerved her.

With a cry of dismay Joe sprang from his wheel and rushed down to the shore of the lake.

By this time the girl had sunk out of view, her natty straw hat alone floating upon the surface of the troubled water.

"By George!" breathed Joe, "I must save her if I can, but I'm afraid it's a case of touch and go."

He was an excellent swimmer, fortunately.

He kicked off his shoes, cast aside his jacket, and sprang into the lake.

With strong, sturdy strokes, hand-over-hand fashion, he worked his way out to the drowning girl.

"She's coming up," he said. "If I can only reach her before she goes down again."

The distance he had to cover was too far, however, and her struggling form went under for the second time before he got within a dozen yards of her.

In the meantime the boy had reached shore and was running frantically toward a fine-looking mansion not far away to get help.

This mansion was the residence of Mr. Walton, and, as it happened, the girl who was now in such desperate peril was his only daughter, the pet of the household.

Joe put on an extra spurt and reached the spot where Jessie Walton had gone down for the second time just as she reappeared in a semi-unconscious state on the surface.

He grabbed her at once and skillfully lifted her head above the waterline, while he swam out with one hand for the keel of the overturned boat.

He reached it after a great effort, and, getting a good hold on it, held the pallid and motionless girl as far out of the water as he could, while he rested himself.

As the moments passed he found his situation growing more and more uncomfortable, for he could only use one arm to hang on, while the other was employed in supporting the girl, who was gradually regaining her senses.

This brought a heavy and awkward strain on his left arm, and he was afraid he would soon have to let go and swim with his burden for the shore.

At this point, however, Mr. Walton and his gardener came toward the lake at a run, the father nearly frantic with anxiety at the thought that his beloved child might now be lying stark and dead at the bottom.

The gardener's sharp eyes made out Joe clinging to the bottom of the sailboat with Jessie in his arm, and he called Mr. Walton's attention to the fact.

There was a rowboat tied to the shore a short distance away, and to this both men repaired as fast as they could get there.

They pushed off and the gardener pulled at the oars with all his energy.

The overturned craft with its living freight was being blown further and further away from the shore, a fact that Joe soon woke up to.

"I'm afraid it's too long a distance to swim with this girl," he said to himself. "I'll have to try and manage to get astride of the keel and haul her up alongside of it. Somebody will be sure to come out after us before long."

He was about to put this scheme into practice when he heard the sound of oars, and looking back across the water saw the approaching boat.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOE CAPTURES A BIG CONTRACT.

Shouting words of encouragement to Joe, and urging his gardener to his best efforts with the oars, Mr. Walton stood up in the boat with his anxious eyes fastened upon his slowly reviving daughter.

At last, after what seemed an age to the distressed father, the boat shot within reach of the capsized sailboat, and Mr. Walton bent down and grasped his child under the arms.

"Thank heaven!" he breathed, as he drew her into the row-boat, "you are safe, my Jessie."

"She murmured, "Father," and feebly tried to throw her arms around his neck.

In the meantime the gardener assisted Joe into the boat and then pulled out for the shore.

Mr. Walton thought of nothing but his daughter until they were within reach of the solid ground, when she was so far recovered as to be able to walk ashore on his arm.

"Young man," said the big fruit grower, "I am under the deepest of obligations to you for going to the assistance of my daughter when that sailboat upset. I feel sure that but for your promptness and courage my child would probably have been drowned. You must come to my home at once, for you are drenched, and your clothes will have to be dried. Besides, I could not think of letting you depart in an off-hand way after what you have done for us."

"Very well, sir," replied Joe. "It will, of course, be necessary for me to have my clothes dried, as this is the only suit I have with me. I will get my coat and shoes and my bicycle, which are only a short distance away, and follow you to the house."

"No, no," replied Mr. Walton; "my gardener will get your things. William, go for this young man's wheel and other articles."

"I hope you are feeling better, Miss Walton," said Joe to the pretty but water-soaked miss, as the three walked up toward the mansion.

"Yes, thank you," with a blush and a smile, as she stole a shy glance into the face of the boy to whom she knew she owed her life. "I am very grateful to you," she added in a low voice.

"Don't mention it, Miss Walton. I am very happy I was able to reach you in time to prevent you from sinking the third time."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Walton, "was she so near death as that?"

"I'm afraid she was, sir. I was fully twenty feet away from her when she sank the second time. I barely got to her as she rose once more to the surface. However, as long as she is safe it doesn't matter how close she came to drowning," said the boy, with a light laugh. "A miss, you know, is as good as a mile."

"My young friend, if you could realize how very dear my motherless child is to me you would understand how words fail to express the gratitude I feel toward you for saving her precious life, and I shall not allow you to leave my place until I have testified my appreciation in some fitting manner."

"I hope you are not thinking of offering me any reward, sir," said Joe, hastily, "for if you are I must decline to receive it."

"No, my lad, I am not thinking of doing that. It would be utterly out of my power to pay you for a service that is beyond price. But I shall insist that you accept some little token as evidence of my esteem and friendship for you."

"You have already thanked me in a way that shows your gratitude, and I think that covers the matter," replied Joe. "I don't see that I have done more than my duty under the circumstances. As long as I am a good swimmer, it was up to me to do the best I could for the young lady. I am sure anybody equal to the emergency would have done just as I did."

They had now reached the house, and Mr. Walton turned his daughter over to the anxious-looking housekeeper, who hurried the girl to her room.

The grateful father led Joe upstairs to a chamber and told the boy to undress.

He brought him a suit of his own underclothes and a pair of trousers.

"Put these on for the present," he said. "I will have your own clothes dried and pressed; but of course it will take a little while. You must consider yourself my guest for the day, at least."

After he had carried Joe's wet things downstairs to the laundry-room, where a servant was instructed to attend to them, Mr. Walton returned to the boy and took him to his library.

"I think we have met before, have we not?" asked the fruit grower.

"Yes, sir," replied the young commission merchant. "I called on you two days ago to secure your fruit trade, but," with a smile, "I had very poor luck. I could not induce you to even consider my proposition."

"Ah, yes, I remember. Your name is—"

"Page—Joe Page, of the produce commission firm of Page & Parsons, No. — West Fourteenth street, New York. My

partner and I have only been in business a short time, but long enough to let the trade know that we're alive and hustling for our share of the fruit and produce that comes to the metropolis."

Mr. Walton smiled good-naturedly.

He now regarded Joe in an altogether different light than previously when the boy had addressed himself to him in the guise of a canvasser for his trade.

"I am afraid I treated you rather churlishly at our last interview," said the fruit grower. "If you will permit me I shall be glad now to make amends for it."

"Well, sir," said the bright boy, taking advantage of the circumstances, with an eye to business, "I shall be happy to repeat my proposition if you care to hear me."

"I will listen to you with pleasure."

Joe at once launched into the object which had brought him into that part of New Jersey, and he talked earnestly and right to the point.

Mr. Walton listened attentively, and when his guest had finished he told him the reasons for his refusal to negotiate with the new firm.

He had been dealing with his present commission people for years and had no fault to find with them.

Besides, one of their representatives had lately called on him and made statements regarding Page & Parsons that did not appear to be to their credit.

"Those statements were all lies," replied Joe, a bit hotly.

"We are stepping on the toes of the old commission men, and they have evidently combined to freeze us out. But it won't do them any good in the long run to run us down. We have the capital at our back and have come to stay. If they go too far I am going to make things so hot for them that they'll be glad to haul in their horns. They ran one man out by crooked methods because he cut into their trade. That man is now our bookkeeper and manager. If they try the same game—as I expect they will—on us, there's going to be something doing they won't like. I'll put every man in jail that I can reach on a criminal charge. We may be boys, but we're out for our rights, and we're going to get them, in spite of every produce commission man in New York."

Joe looked tight all over, and Mr. Walton rather admired his pluck.

"Well, my young friend," he said, "you have won my lifelong gratitude, and I am going to take advantage of this opportunity to repay you in part for your invaluable services this day. I will sign an agreement with you to send you all my consignments hereafter, and take the risk of you doing as well by me as the other commission people."

"You'll take no risk whatever, sir," replied Joe, promptly. "If we can't show as good results as the others, I'll tear up your contract and release you from any further obligation to patronize us."

"Well, that is certainly very fair on your part," smiled the fruit grower. "Now, have you done any business with my neighbors?"

"No, sir. I haven't caught one. They all seem to follow your lead, and what is good enough for you seems to suit them. I hope to have better luck with them when I take your agreement around with me and show them."

"I think there is a better way than that."

"What is it, sir?"

"If you will remain all night with us here, I'll take you around in my auto to-morrow morning and personally urge my neighbors to sign agreements with you. I think I will be able to secure you the entire output of the district."

"I shall be glad to accept your generous invitation, Mr. Walton," replied Joe, overjoyed at the brilliant prospect. "It will be the biggest kind of victory for the firm of Page & Parsons."

"Your partner is not as young as you are, is he?" asked the fruit grower.

"Yes, sir. There is not more than two months difference in our ages."

"Well, I must say you are a pair of enterprising young fellows and deserve all the encouragement you can receive. You have interested me greatly, and, apart from the obligation I feel under to you, I shall be glad to give your business a boost. My fruit is the most sought after in New York, and consequently commands top-notch prices. It will be something of a card for you to handle it, for it will compel the wholesalers to patronize you, and will bring your firm prominently before the trade."

"That's right, sir. I had that in view when I came out

here to make a try for you, though every one I spoke to told me I hadn't a ghost of a show to catch you."

"Then everybody will find they miscalculated your persuasive powers," laughed Mr. Walton.

"I'm afraid it is more luck than anything else, sir. If I hadn't been so fortunate as to be on hand to rescue your daughter I am satisfied I would have taken the train to-day back to New York empty-handed."

Joe's clothes were dried and pressed in time for him to go to dinner looking as he usually did.

He was then formally introduced to Jessie Walton by her father, and he was quite impressed by the girl's good looks and vivaciousness.

She had not suffered in any way from her involuntary bath, and he voted her the most charming young lady he had ever met.

CHAPTER XIV.

PAGE & PARSONS ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS.

Joe found Jessie Walton very entertaining both at dinner and in the parlor afterward.

She played quite brilliantly on the piano, and sang with bewitching effect one of the latest musical novelties.

Then she sat alongside of him on a lounge and talked about the fine fruit farm her father owned, how he must go over it in the morning, and how very glad she was that he was in the commission business and able to handle the Walton brand, which she had no hesitation in declaring the best on the market, as it undoubtedly was.

"Your father's trade will give me a big boost," said Joe. "I ought to thank you for putting me in the way of securing it."

"Thank me!" she exclaimed, opening her eyes with surprise. "Why, I had nothing to do with it. I didn't even know you were in the commission business until father told me he had signed an agreement to send you all of his fruit."

"But if you hadn't fallen into the water, and given me the opportunity to pull you out, I should never have got the contract," he said, smilingly.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, archly. "Then I didn't get a ducking in vain, did I?"

"It was a mighty risky ducking, Miss Jennie, and I wouldn't advise you to repeat it."

"I won't go out again in that boat on the lake," she said, with a positive nod of her head; "at least, not with Archie Davis. He told me he could sail the boat all right."

"I am afraid he has an exaggerated opinion of his abilities in that direction," replied Joe. "I was watching the boat for some minutes before she upset, and I am bound to say he doesn't know the first thing about it. It was very foolish for him to try such a dangerous experiment on so windy an afternoon."

"Well, I just dote on the water; that's why I allowed him to persuade me to go out. He insisted that it wasn't blowing too hard. I shall give him a piece of my mind when I see him. He ought to have been ashamed to leave me to drown, when he can swim. He might have helped me get as far as the overturned boat. Then we both could have held on till some one saw our predicament. If it hadn't been for you"—and she looked gratefully into Joe's face—"I am sure I would never have come ashore alive."

"Well, you did get ashore alive, so we'll let the matter go at that."

"And you believe I am truly grateful to you, don't you?"

"Sure, I do."

"I am so glad my father was able to put something in your way. You may be sure you have his custom for good as long as you are in the commission business."

"I am glad to hear that, Joe, but we expect to deserve it by handling it right up to the mark. If we couldn't do that we would have no right to expect to hold it, for business is business, and your father would suffer in pocket and reputation if his fruit was not properly marketed."

"Father hasn't any fears of that. He told me you were the smartest boy he ever talked to."

"I am much obliged to your father for his good opinion. I hope to deserve it."

"I think you deserve it," she replied, demurely.

"You are very kind to say so, Miss Jessie. I also hope to hold your friendship indefinitely, too."

"There's no fear of that, either. I shall never forget what you did for me as long as I live."

Mr. Walton now came into the parlor and the conversation became general.

Next morning after breakfast Joe was shown over the big fruit farm, and he was willing to believe that it was the finest in the State of New Jersey.

Mr. Walton then took him around to his neighbors in his automobile, and Joe soon had half a dozen signed agreements in his possession.

They returned to the mansion in time for lunch, after which Joe said he must return to New York to make arrangements for the reception of the big consignments that would be coming his way in a day or two.

He found Sam at the office when he got back.

"You didn't do so bad in Jersey, Joe," said his partner, with a grin.

"You don't know yet how well I did," replied Joe.

"I know there's a lot of produce coming in every day from that State, and it wouldn't have come to us unless you had been handing the farmers out a pretty stiff game of talk."

"I did the best I know how in that direction. I find I'm not a bad talker when I get down to business. You didn't do so bad yourself up-State."

"I had to talk some of the people deaf, dumb and blind before I could make any impression on them. Some folks are awfully thick," remarked Sam.

"Well, as long as you get them in the end, it didn't matter how much trouble you had. They'll stick all the closer to us for it."

"I hope they will. Well, how about the Sunbury section? Mr. Black said you made a break for the Walton Fruit Farm and neighboring places. How did you make out?"

"What chance did Mr. Black seem to think I had?" asked Joe.

"Very slim. Jackson & Cornish, Bailey & Co., and Cooke & Denning have a mortgage on the whole of that district."

"Who said they have?"

"Why, Mr. Black, of course."

"I won't deny that he had good reason for his opinion. It was the hardest proposition I've been up against. Yesterday noon, after having talked to every grower in that section, I was ready to throw up my hands in disgust. The other commission houses got a man down there before me, and what he didn't say to queer us isn't worth mentioning."

"Is that a fact?" asked Sam, indignantly.

"Yes, that's a fact. I had it from Mr. Walton's own lips."

"Then your trip was a failure?" said Sam, glumly.

"No, it wasn't. Something happened that changed the whole complexion of matters."

"What happened?" asked Sam, with a look of interest.

"Well, a very pretty girl tumbled into the lake adjoining the Walton Farm just as I was passing by on my wheel. I jumped into the water and saved her life."

"The deuce you did!"

"I did for a fact."

"Gee! you are quite a hero," with a chuckle. "A pretty girl, too. I wouldn't mind saving the life of a pretty girl myself. Is it a case of spoons?"

"Nonsense!"

"Well, what did that have to do with your business?"

"A great deal."

"Oh, come, now, don't keep a fellow on the rack. How did the fact that you saved the girl help your business?"

"She happened to be the daughter of Mr. Walton."

"You don't say!" whistled Sam.

"Mr. Walton had turned our proposition down hard two days before. He would hardly listen to me. After I saved his daughter he couldn't do enough for me."

"I should think not."

"Well, he signed an agreement to send every crate of fruit and produce he ships hereafter direct to us."

"That's fine. He's a big shipper."

"And that wasn't all he did for me."

"What else did he do?"

"Took me around in his auto to all the neighboring farms and talked the proprietors into signing similar agreements."

"You don't mean it!" gasped Sam.

"I wouldn't say it if I didn't mean it."

"Gee whiz! There'll be war in the provision district over this. Why, Jackson & Cornish, Bailey & Co., and Cooke & Denning will be warring. It won't be healthy for us to walk by their stores."

"Don't you worry about them. They tried to do us a mean

trick in that district, and I'm glad they have got it in the neck. Some other firms I might mention will get it in the neck, too, if they aren't careful."

"I'll call Mr. Black in and you can tell him the good news," said Sam.

Mr. Black could hardly believe his ears when Joe told him that hereafter they had a steady customer in the Walton Fruit Farm, and also that the six other Sunbury farmers had signed regular season agreements.

"Young gentlemen," said their manager, "you have made the greatest coup in the history of the commission business. Page & Parsons is bound to go right to the front.

"You bet," said Sam, emphatically. "And we're going to stay at the front, too."

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE & PARSONS BREAK INTO THE CANNED GOODS TRADE.

If an earthquake shock had struck the wholesale provision district south of Fourteenth street it couldn't have created greater consternation among the produce commission houses than when the fact became generally known to the trade that Page & Parsons, the new firm of commission merchants, had actually captured not only the Walton Fruit Farm, but every other fruit grower in the Sunbury district.

What Jackson & Cornish had to say on the subject would hardly bear repetition in print.

Bailey & Co. and Cooke & Denning were also heard to use language that was more forcible than polite.

Then the trade made another discovery—that Page & Parsons were only boys not yet seventeen.

Before they found that fact out they had imagined that their old rival, William Black, who had been observed in charge of the new concern, was masquerading under a new name.

How two boys could start in the commission business and skin it up such a good trade inside of a month was a marvel to the men who had been in the trade for years.

The young firm was now handling a remarkable amount of business, considering the short time Joe and Sam were in the trade.

After this Joe Page remained at the office, while Sam took short trips throughout New Jersey drumming up additional customers.

Mr. Black had proved to be invaluable to them, and the firm raised his salary half as much again as had been originally agreed upon between them.

It was about this time that the boys received a note from Constable Snodgrass, of Pembroke, notifying them that their presence would be required at the trial of Jules Glorieux and his companion, Gaston, which was to take place two days later at Dexter, the county seat.

So Joe telegraphed his mother to send John, the hired man, with a rig to meet Sam and himself at Highland on the arrival of a certain train over the West Shore Railroad.

Everybody in Pembroke knew that Joe Page and Sam Parsons had gone into the produce commission business in New York City, and had heard they were doing well.

Therefore when the boys appeared in the village, in company with John, on their way to Dexter, the day after their return home, they were objects of much interest.

The trial of the Frenchmen did not take long.

They were defended by a town lawyer, but the evidence against them was sufficient to secure their conviction, and they were sentenced to five years in the Auburn Penitentiary.

Joe then secured an order from the judge for the return to him of the four boxes of English sovereigns which had formed a sensational feature of the trial.

Joe's testimony on the witness stand of the character of the contents of the boxes, as well as his story, corroborated by Sam and John, of the finding of the treasure chest under the foundation of the old stone house on his mother's property, aroused a good deal of excitement in court.

The news reached Pembroke ahead of them, and the village almost mobbed the boys in an effort to find out additional particulars about the remarkable discovery.

Joe and Sam hurried the English money to New York, where they turned it over to the trust company, and the latter received a check for something over ninety-one thousand dollars.

Sam received the additional five thousand dollars his chum had promised him for his services the night the boxes were found in the Page home, and he immediately turned it into the bank.

Joe put in ten thousand dollars himself, which put the

boys on an equal footing, with a capital of twenty thousand dollars.

Joe now turned his attention to the handling of canned goods and laid in a big stock of Western goods.

The firm then notified the wholesalers who supplied the numerous summer hotels, just opening up for the season, that it was in a position to supply them with canned goods at the lowest market figures and without delay.

In fact, Page & Parsons proclaimed the fact broadcast that they made a specialty of rush orders, and this announcement brought a flood of orders for canned goods to the young firm when the first hot wave caused the hotel proprietors to clamor for instant delivery of extra supplies, which the wholesalers were unable to obtain in time from the commission people they were accustomed to patronize.

"I tell you, Joe, we're doing a bang-up trade now, aren't we?" said Sam one morning, as he watched his partner going through the early mail.

"I don't know as we have any cause to complain," replied Joe, "but I hope to see it grow still better. In fact, I have already got my hooks out for some contracts to supply canned goods. There's no reason why we shouldn't work up a very large business, for I have fifty thousand dollars in bank to loan the firm at any moment."

"Well, we can't do too much business to suit me," answered Sam. "The more the merrier. We've got several of the old produce houses skinned to death already. That private detective we employed kind of discouraged the crooked work our rivals expected to practise to put us out of business. I guess they are satisfied now that we are too smart for them."

"I hear some of them have adopted our square method of doing business in an effort to coax some of their old customers back."

"I'm not surprised to hear that," replied Sam. "We turned the tide pretty strong against the old method."

"Want to see the plans for our new home up-country, Sam?" said Joe, taking down a roll of blue prints that lay on the top of his desk.

"Sure, I do," replied his chum, eagerly.

"We're going to build it on the thirty-five acre plot."

"The one where the old stone house is, eh?"

"Yes. Mother is going to have a fine lawn all around the house. It will be one of the swellest residences in the county."

"Well, you've got the stuff to make it so."

"Mother is going to put it up herself with a part of the \$20,000 I gave her."

At that moment Mr. Black opened the glass door.

"There is a young lady in the store wishes to see you, Mr. Page," he said.

"Wishes to see me, eh?" said Joe, jumping up from his desk and wondering who it could be. "I'll be back in a minute, Sam."

When he walked into the store he saw a handsomely dressed girl standing near the door.

As he approached her she turned around and Joe, to his surprise, recognized Jessie Walton.

"Why, Miss Walton!" he exclaimed, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

"Am I welcome?" she asked, laughingly.

"As welcome as the flowers in May and the roses in June," he exclaimed. "Come right into the office and I'll introduce you to my partner. He's been crazy to see the young lady I pulled out of the water."

Joe led the way inside.

"Miss Walton, this is my chum and partner, Sam Parsons." Sam, this is Mr. Walton's daughter."

Sam bowed and motioned Jessie to take the chair beside the desk he had just vacated.

Jessie stayed half an hour and then declared she must take the Desbrosses street ferry in order to catch a certain train for Sunbury.

"She's a peach for fair," remarked Sam after she had taken her departure. "I would like to have the inside track with such a girl. I guess you're pretty solid with her. At any rate, you ought to be, after saving her life."

"Oh, I dare say she likes me well enough," replied Joe, in an offhand way.

"And how do you like her?" grinned his partner.

"Come, now, Sam, you want to know too much," replied Joe, flushing up.

Sam chuckled gleefully, for he saw he had touched on a tender spot.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

As the summer advanced, Page & Parsons had all they could do to handle the fruit and produce that came their way.

"Say, Joe," said Sam, bursting into the office one morning at the end of the summer, "it looks like a sure thing that the United States is going to interfere in this Cuban mix-up. The paper is full of it this morning. Now, if the Government sends troops to the island there'll be a sudden call for canned meats and vegetables. How do we stand to fill a rush order in that direction if some contractor should happen to interview us on the subject?"

"Well, Sam," replied his partner, "we can deliver \$100,000 worth of such stuff inside of twenty-four hours, and \$50,000 worth more right on top of that."

"Whew!" whistled Sam. "Do you mean to say you have bought that much stock? You couldn't have paid for it."

"I've bought it after a fashion. That is, I've ordered \$100,000 worth of the goods to be held for a certain time subject to our order. This cost us \$5,000. I've also spoken for the \$50,000 worth provisionally."

"How did you come to do that?"

"Soon after the first suggestion appeared in the papers that President Roosevelt might consider it necessary to shake the 'big stick' over our sister Republic I found out that a certain contractor had received a tip from a big official that bids for commissary stores would soon be called for. On the strength of that I negotiated for the stuff I have mentioned and then put in an offer to the said contractor to supply him with \$100,000 worth of goods at a figure that would give us a fair margin of profit. I received a non-committal reply from him, but I concluded to risk \$5,000 on the chance of getting the order. The goods are ready to be shipped from the Middle West on a telegraphic notice, and arrangements can be made to send them on by fast freight if necessary. If the Government should make a quick demand for supplies I think we can meet the emergency in shorter time than any one else in our line."

"Joe, you've got a long head, upon my word, you have," said Sam, admiringly.

"The times are so swift, Sam, a fellow has got to see some distance ahead or he isn't in the running."

"That isn't any lie. By the way, I see you've got your grip here this morning. Where are you going over Sunday? Home?"

"No. Got an invitation out to Sunbury."

"That's the third," snickered Sam. "Things are rushing in that direction."

"Oh, you get out. This invitation is from Mr. Walton."

"Sure, it is," laughed Sam. "Miss Walton hasn't the least idea you're coming. No, of course not. Won't be at the station to meet you in her pony phaeton, like she did on the other occasions. Ho, ho, Joe, you can't fool your old pard," and Sam walked chuckling out of the office.

Joe took an early afternoon train for Sunbury and found Jessie Walton waiting for him at the station with her dog-cart.

She drove him to her home herself, as she was quite a whip in her way.

He enjoyed himself immensely during his short stay, and was decidedly sorry when Monday morning came and he had to leave for New York.

"What do you think, Joe?" said Sam, coming into the private office that afternoon; "Jackson & Cornish have gone into the canned goods business."

"Who told you they had? It's the first I've heard of it."

"Johnson, bookkeeper for Tibbetts & Co. He and I are kind of friendly. He told me Jackson had nailed a big contract this morning, but he couldn't tell me any of the particulars."

"Where did Johnson get his information from? Do you think it's reliable?"

"He got a hint from one of Jackson's employees."

"Well, I suppose we shall find them trying to cut into our trade. They're pretty sore over the way Mr. Walton shook them for us. If they could turn the trick on us once and a while it would make them feel good."

Half an hour later Joe was walking down the street and he almost ran into Jackson.

"Did you get that Government order you're after yet?" he asked, sneeringly.

Then he passed on, leaving Joe in a state of great astonishment, for this was the first time Jackson had ever addressed him.

Next morning the papers had the news that certain troops of the Department of the East had been ordered to hold themselves in readiness for a sudden departure for Cuba.

That meant, if true, that supplies would be needed at once, so Joe called up the contractor to whom he had submitted a bid and asked for information.

The reply came back that a contract had been made already with Jackson & Cornish to furnish all that would be required.

This was a severe disappointment to the boy.

"Well, Sam, Jackson & Cornish have managed to get back at us at last," he said when his partner came into the office later on.

"They have?" cried Sam, in some astonishment. "How is that?"

Joe gave him the particulars and his chum was disgusted.

"That's fierce. Shall we lose that \$5,000?"

"It looks like it just now. But don't worry, we can stand it. I took chances on a long shot, and a screw worked loose somehow. That's the whole story."

About two o'clock a newsboy brought an afternoon paper into the office.

Joe picked it up and the first thing he noticed in big type was a railroad accident on the Lake Shore Railroad.

A fast freight had been derailed east of Cleveland, and about twenty cars had gone down an embankment and been smashed into kindling wood.

The accident had been caused by a defective switch.

The story had no particular significance for Joe, and he soon tossed the paper aside.

It was getting on to five o'clock when a man he had never seen before was admitted to his room.

"You have the reputation for being able to fill rush orders for canned goods, Mr. Page," said his visitor, coming directly to the point. "Now, can you deliver in Jersey City a pretty big order—say \$100,000 worth of prime preserved meats and vegetables—in twenty hours? If so, let me have your price."

"Who do you represent, Mr. Pratt?" asked Joe, curiously.

"That isn't material," replied his caller. "I want your spot cash figure. Money talks, doesn't it?"

"It usually does," replied Joe, who then quoted the man a price which his visitor accepted conditional on the delivery of the goods within twenty-four hours at the outside, but twenty if possible.

"Here is a certified check for \$10,000 on account," said the man, "as a guarantee the goods will be taken on arrival within the specified time. Send your representative with the documents to my office to-morrow the moment you receive word the cars are in the freight yard, and the balance will be paid in bills."

The man took his departure, after laying his card on Joe's desk, and then the young commission merchant rang up the Dundee concern on the long distance wire, and completed his purchase of the \$100,000 order, conditional on arrival of the goods at Jersey City within twenty-two hours.

Next morning Joe learned that the canned goods Jackson & Cornish had ordered from Chicago to fill their Government contract had gone to smash in the Lake Shore freight wreck, and then he smelt a mouse.

Jackson & Cornish in a roundabout way had placed the same order with him to fill, sacrificing their profit in order to be able to fill their contract.

The goods arrived in time and Page & Parsons got their money for them, and then the two young partners had a quiet laugh at the expense of their rivals.

As this event happened only the other day, we must close our story at this point, leaving Joe Page and his friend, Sam Parsons, in full swing on their road to success, two of the smartest boys in the city of New York.

We need only mention one more fact which Joe confided to the author the other day, and that is Jessie Walton had, with her father's consent, promised to marry him when she reaches her eighteenth birthday.

With those words we close the career of a fortunate boy.

Next week's issue will contain "CHASING POINTERS; OR, THE LUCKIEST BOY IN WALL STREET."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

The Gaekwar of Baroda has contributed \$160,000 to provide aeroplanes for use on the British front. Last December he purchased the steamship Empress of India as a hospital ship for Indian troops. Soon after the war began he offered all his troops and resources to aid the British.

According to the London Times, the German authorities at Brussels have offered a reward of \$2,500 for information as to the location of a wireless telegraph station supposed to be working in some private house in that city. For nine months it has furnished the people of Brussels with war news which the Germans desired to keep from them, and the search for it has hitherto been unsuccessful.

Gold has been discovered in the town of Diana, Lewis County, N. Y., according to a claim filed the other day with Secretary of State Francis M. Hugo by Nathan L. Dike, a resident of that section. "Take notice," the claim reads, "that this day Nathan Dike has found gold in the rocks on or near the south line of the old Barber farm in the town of Diana." The dimensions of the claim are set forth. A dollar bill accompanied the communication.

The disabled Japanese cruiser Asama, which went ashore near Turtle Bay, Lower California, early in February, is expected to arrive in a day or two. She is being convoyed by the Japanese naval repair ship Kwanto Maru, which will be permitted to take on coal enough to carry her to the nearest home port. The cause of the Asama's grounding has not been made known. Her hull was damaged and months were required to raise the vessel and repair the damage.

In one of a series of articles in the New York Sun on the Mexican situation, Ray G. Carroll says: "Many an American army officer has told me of his heartsick feelings on seeing boxes of cartridges, rifles and machine guns cross the Rio Grande. Army officers know that at a time not far distant they may be called upon to lead their men against these same munitions of war. They point to the comparatively recent situation at Vera Cruz, where Mexican sentries faced our men with military rifles and cartridges of the latest American make."

The age of the "horseless farm" has arrived. G. T. Wycoff, of Crivitz, Wis., who moved to Marinette County from Bloomington, Ill., two years ago, works an improved farm exclusively with a tractor. He also cleared the farm and made it ready for cultivation without the use of horses. His "horseless farm" consists of eighty acres. He owns an eleven-ton tractor, which takes the place of horses in all farmwork. He drives an automobile and generally uses it for trips to markets, but when heavy loads are taken to town the tractor is used to pull trains of two or three wagons.

The Pennsylvania railroad will offer the United States Government an army of 100,000 men. It is the biggest move ever made by any company in the world for national preparedness. It comes from the highest Pennsylvania railroad authorities, who are maturing a plan to let every employee take a month's vacation and go to a training camp for military instruction. The size of the army depends upon how many employees will accept this offer. If everybody went the Pennsylvania's legion would greatly outnumber the army which Meade commanded at Gettysburg.

The Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Company, of Yonkers, N. Y., made its ninth semi-annual distribution of bonuses to its older employees recently. Approximately \$65,000 was distributed among 2,500 men and women, making a total of \$600,000 which the company has shared with its employees since the plan was put into effect. Employees who had been with the company ten years or more received checks equal to 10 per cent. of their wages in the preceding six months, and the five-year employees got checks for 5 per cent. of their compensation in the same period.

Tearful eyes, some of them those of American spectators, looked at the wedding in a Paris hospital of the Corsican lieutenant Cantora, who lost both eyes and his left arm during the Marne fighting, and his fiancée, Mlle. Pat-trion, a fellow-countrywoman, who came from Ajaccio for the ceremony. Immediately after being wounded Cantora wrote to his fiancée returning her the engagement ring and offering to release her from her promise. She refused the offer, saying she felt all the more bound to keep faith with him. At the wedding Cantora wore the cross of the Legion of Honor and the much-prized military medal, both awarded him for his bravery.

To handle the large number of submarines which are to be built for the navy it has been suggested that the Government should construct small drydocks which could be kept at submarine bases. These small floating drydocks, about 300 feet in length, would not only be adapted to use for submarines, but for destroyers and large naval tugs. As they can be taken from one port to another, they could be utilized in establishing temporary bases for submarines and in the development of a general scheme for their mobilization and distribution. It is suggested that it might be possible under certain weather conditions to make use of such docks in raising sunken submarines, possibly using two, one on either side of the submarine. After they were attached by cables they could be pumped out to lift the submarine, much as pontoons were used in raising the F-4. It is estimated that a 300-foot floating drydock could handle a 5,000-ton ship. The 550-foot floating drydock at New Orleans is able to raise 15,000 tons.

THE NINE WONDERS

— OR —

THE ROUGH RIDERS OF THE DIAMOND FIELDS

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXI (continued)

"Out!" yelled the umpire, and the home team retired to the field without having gotten beyond first base.

In the second inning Zeb Martin was the first at the bat, and the first ball delivered he smashed to left field, and was promptly caught.

"Out!" called the umpire.

Harry Moore followed with a ball to right field, on which he reached first base. Jimmie Elliot sent him to second on a ball to left field and he rested at first.

Teddy smashed a high ball after one strike had been called on him and was caught out by the center fielder.

"Two out," called the umpire, and Knatt took up the bat and, after two strikes had been called, smashed out a hot grounder to center field, on which Harry reached third and Jimmie second.

Patton smashed a high ball to right, where it was collared by the right fielder.

"Three out!" called the umpire, and the nine retired to the field with no runs.

Again the home team faced the young pitcher of the Nine Wonders and this time the trepidation of some of them was plainly perceptible. Their last batsman was pitched out with ease. The next one to follow, after two strikes, smashed the ball straight to center field into the hands of Eddie McCoy.

"Two out," called the umpire.

The third one at the willow smashed the third ball like the crack of a rifle, sending it bounding along the ground to left field. It got away from the fielder and the batsman dashed to first and sprinted to second with a speed that sustained the old-time reputation of his nine.

He reached there by a slide just as the ball arrived. It was a two-bagger that elicited rounds of applause from the crowd, hundreds of whom roared out to the next man at the bat:

"Bring him home—bring him home!"

"He can't do it," called out Eddie McCoy. "For our mascot is looking at the pitcher!"

There was a roar of laughter at the expense of the humiliated mascot, who laughed and blushed behind a large bouquet of roses.

Tom turned, looked over his shoulder at the girl, and quickly delivered one of his flattering epigrams.

The batsman lost the air, and the umpire called out:

"One strike!"

When Tom got the ball again he looked over his shoulder at the girl once more, who was watching him with interest.

He quickly delivered the ball, and another strike was called.

Again he looked up the mascot, then turned and sent the ball at the batsman with an old-time curve. The latter smashed it straight back at the pitcher, who reached out and caught it without having moved an inch from his position.

"Three out!" yelled the umpire.

The visitors once more went to the bat, with Dick Crenshaw the first to take it up. He smashed the first ball to right field and was caught out.

Eli McCoy followed with a hot grounder to left field and got to first. Jack Tilson sent him to second with a hot one to right. Martin smashed one straight to center, where it was collared by a flying leap of the outfielder.

Harry Moore smashed a ball out to right, where it was badly muffed, and Eddie got to third, whilst Jack reached second.

Jimmie Elliot, after two strikes, smashed it to center field, and Eddie bounded across the home plate, and Jack was put to sleep at third.

"Three out," called the umpire, and the boys retired to the field with another run to their credit.

When the home team went to the bat, their captain instructed them to strike at every ball, even though they saw little chance of hitting it.

The first man with the willow followed his advice, and smashed the highest ball that had been so far struck during the game. Jimmie Elliot collared it, and he was out.

The next man had three strikes called on him after he had as many times smashed the air.

The next one got to first base on balls. The man who followed him smashed out a two-bagger to right field that landed the man at first base on third and a tremendous roar of cheering from the crowd, whilst he himself landed at second.

The next smashed out a hot grounder to right field, and the man at third bounded across the plate and a roar of applause, but the batsman, in attempting to reach second, was put to sleep ten feet away from it by Eddie McCoy.

The nine retired with one run to their credit, while the Rough Riders began their fourth inning with two runs to their score.

The fourth, fifth and sixth innings developed splendid work by both nines, yet without either adding anything but goose eggs to their score.

In the seventh the home team made one run, thus even- ing up the score, whilst in the eighth each

the made one run, and the ninth inning was opened by the Rough Riders with a two-bagger by Dick Crenshaw.

Mc Coy followed with a ball to right field that sent Dick to left, while he rested at third. Then Jack took up the bat to bring Dick home, but was caught out by the left fielder, and Zeb Martin quickly met a similar fate.

But Harry Moore smashed a ball to center field, on which Dick bounded over the home plate, while Ed fell in trying to reach third.

The nine retired to the field with four runs to their credit, and the home team went to the bat with the knowledge that they would have to make two runs to win.

The first man at the bat got to first base on balls. His successor went down before the pitcher, whilst the third man smashed out a two-bagger to center field, landing the man at first on third.

The interest of the vast audience in the game now reached fever heat, for if the man on third safely reached the home plate, the game would be tied.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BOYS VISIT THEIR MASCOT.

The man on third base was one of the brightest members of the home team. He was also a splendid baserunner. As Knatt stood in the box facing the batsman, the man on third base advanced some fifteen feet or so toward the home plate, when a sharp whistle from Ed McCoy near second base caused him to glance quickly over his right shoulder.

He noticed the baserunner's position, and quick as a flash of lightning he wheeled and sent the ball whizzing toward third base. The baserunner was evidently startled by the suddenness of it, and he made a dash for the home plate instead of returning to third. Had Harry muffed the ball he would have made the run safely, but he caught it and hurled it to the pitcher, who caught it and pressed it on the back of the baserunner's neck as he was sliding for the plate. His right hand was within two feet of the plate as Patten pressed the ball down on him.

"Out," called the umpire, but the crowd roared its appreciation of the baserunner's pluck and speed, as he had missed it only by one brief second.

Many of the backers of the team were disposed to find fault with him for taking such a desperate chance, while others declared that the chances were desperate, anyway, and that the narrow margin by which he lost the run fully sustained his judgment in making it.

There was another man on first base, and the next batsman muffed him to second by a hot grounder sent to right field, and the one following moved him up to third.

Then their best batsman took up the willow, and after the umpire had been called on him, Eddie McCoy sung out to the beautiful mascot on the grandstand:

"Now you pretty thing, give us some of your fine work."

The suddenness of his call startled the girl, as everybody in the vast crowd turned and gazed at her. They all knew that if the batsman missed the third ball the Rough Riders would win, and the Nine Wanderers would win by a score of 4 to 3.

Tom turned and cast a quick glance at her. Like a flash she sprang to her feet and threw the huge bouquet of roses she had been holding in her hand as far as she could in his direction.

It fell on the ground, but no member of either nine dared leave his position to take it up.

"That settles it, Tommy," cried Eddie at a loud voice, "let 'er go."

Tom wheeled and delivered a scorching rip-sizzer, and the vast crowd rose up and gazed with bated breath as they watched him.

Swish went the bat, and the ball rested in the hands of the catcher.

A great roar went up from the crowd that drowned the umpire's voice, as he called:

"Out."

The Rough Riders had won by a score of 4 to 3 after one of the most spirited games that had ever been played in that city.

The cheering continued several minutes, during which the captain of the home team went up to Teddy and extended his hand, saying as he did so:

"You have beaten us fairly, but I think it was done more by your pitcher than by the work at the bat or on bases."

"Thank you," said Teddy. "We always try to do our best, and it is a pleasure to play such a nine as yours."

While the captains of the two nines were shaking hands and exchanging compliments, the Rough Riders made a dash for the front of the grandstand, where they showered thanks and blessings at their beautiful mascot.

She was almost overcome with excitement, for hundreds of enthusiastic people of both sexes crowded about her offering congratulations.

The boys lifted Tom on their shoulders to enable him to climb over the grandstand and reach her side.

"It is all your work, Miss Coppinger," said he, as he grasped her hand.

"Indeed, no," she replied; "it was your work that did it."

"You can't make us believe it," he laughed, "because all our boys are great believers in the mascot idea, and all the crack teams of the country seem to believe the same thing, if what I have read about it in papers is true."

"Tom, my boy," exclaimed Parry Parton, who was with the mascot all through the game, "it was hot work, and the finest game I ever saw."

"So it was," assented Tom, "and we were so pushed that I entirely forgot my lame leg."

"I was thinking of that all the time," said Miss Coppinger, "and kept wondering if you were suffering any pain."

"Thank you," said he; "I don't think I felt a single twinge of pain after the first inning. But say, Parton," and he turned to the manager, "you remember the man who backed the unknown solitary batsman after the game at St. Louis?"

"Yes," said Parton; "what about him?"

"He was out there in the crowd where he was looking me on the face during the entire game, and somehow I couldn't get rid of the idea that he was at the bottom of some trick that was to be played on us."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

ITALIAN ARMY SHOES.

The C. A. Eaton Company, of Brockton, Mass., has received a heavy order for shoes from the Italian Government. While the size of the order was not stated by the firm's local manager, it is understood to be for 2,000,000 pairs. The contracts have been signed and the firm's factories at Brockton and Augusta have begun work on the order. The terms of the contract call for the production at the two factories of 15,000 pairs of shoes per day, it being necessary to run the factories night and day.

The Eaton Company, with its present day shift at the two factories is now turning out 250,000 pairs of shoes a month. With the new order they will be required to produce 375,000 pairs in the same period. The latest contract to be awarded the Eaton concern is the third received by the firm. Other Brockton shoe manufacturing firms are looking for foreign army orders. The Italian Government purchasing commissions now in this country will probably place additional shoe orders with Brockton manufacturers in the near future.

MILLION FOR BALL PLAYER.

William Buck Kenworthy, second baseman of the Kansas City Federal League team, has fallen heir to a million dollars from the estate of his uncle, Joshua Kenworthy, late of London, England, who was burned to death in a hotel in Connecticut a year ago while touring this country. This uncle inherited \$30,000,000 a number of years ago, and at the time of his death he had increased this fortune to \$50,000,000. He had divided the money among relatives, both in the United States, England and Ireland.

Buck Kenworthy's father and mother and three brothers put in a claim for a share of the estate, and definite word has been received from London that the claim has been allowed. Kenworthy admitted the story.

Five million dollars was allotted to his family. He said that the estate would have been settled and the money paid before this had it not been for the war.

Kenworthy is single and was born at Cambridge, Ohio. He played his first professional ball with East Liverpool, Ohio. Next he went to Zanesville, in the Central League, where he played in 1908-10. In 1911 he went to the Denver club, and the Washington American League club picked him up in 1912. When Clark Griffith sent him to Sacramento, in 1913, he jumped to the Kansas City Federal League team. The day he received the word of his good fortune he made a home run.

QUEER HAPPENINGS.

House of John M. Myers, school principal at Willington, N. J., ruined by water, faucet left on in June, running all summer.

Ralph Vrobel, seventy-seven, of Bloomingdale, N. J., civil war veteran on pension list for thirty years, receives notice pension stopped because he was deserter.

A blue heron pecked out left eye of Louis Ellenson, twelve, of Asbury Park, N. J., when he tried to capture it.

Mrs. Violet Bimont hid heroin in loaf of bread for husband, prisoner in Bronx; caught and arrested.

Morris Eisner, seventy-five, No. 151 Norfolk street, fell eight inches; fracturing skull and died.

George Greego, farmer near Mineola, L. I., refuses request for bushel of potatoes from stranger, who shoots him, in abdomen.

Health Inspector Tremallo, Passaic, N. J., empties 1,500 bottles of soft drinks into sewer, seized from bottling works that violated law.

Prize pony of John C. Voight, Morristown, N. J., will have artificial foot when it exhibits at horse show this fall.

Some one put shunk in grand piano—and then forgot about it—at autumn dance of Free From Care Club, Winsted, Conn.

New York City gains 80,000 hours' work daily, at no extra cost, by putting into effect winter schedule for employees.

Morris Schultz and Joseph Lach held in \$2,000 bail, charged with offering paper for making dollar-bills at \$50 a yard.

Tortoise, five feet in diameter, washed ashore on the beach at Freeport, L. I.

"I came to clean up New York," said Antonio Madris, seventeen, of Providence, when arrested at Providence Line pier. Had revolver, cartridges, flashlight, jimmy and screwdriver.

Subterranean lake on farm of Johnston Cornish, of Harmony Township, N. J., has resulted in his vegetable garden sinking twelve feet.

Boy horsethief captured at Winsted, Conn., wears cowboy hat, has rifle strapped to saddle.

Seymour, Conn., man gets injunction to prevent Seymour Manufacturing Company's plant from operating at night. Says it disturbs his sleep.

John S. Whitesell, Allamuchy, N. J., is dragged quarter of a mile by runaway horse and hangs on until horse tires and stops.

Charles Buck, Jr., four, Jamaica, L. I., cats ink bottles in Forest Park and dies.

District Attorney Cropsey, Brooklyn, finds rats chewing up documentary evidence, and indicts them with rat-traps.

Ethel L. Lawes, matron of Belknap Home, Far Rockaway, L. I., awakens at dawn to find stranger kissing her; has him arrested.

William Schember, of Glendale, L. I., complains to police of loafers on near-by corner, and first person arrested is his own son.

Richard T. Cronin and Philip Ahearn, cousins, die in same hospital at Hartford, Conn., both from injuries in pole vaulting.

Charles Miller, arraigned in dresses at Yorkville court, pleads he always wore women's clothes—his mother taught him.

SIX WEEKS IN THE MOON

— OR —

A TRIP BEYOND THE ZENITH

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III (continued)

The grass which adorned the slopes was white and peculiarly brittle like glass. Unlike the grasses of the earth, its roots were uppermost, and seemed to derive nutriment from the atmosphere. In fact, everything in the moon seemed to be exactly opposite to that which exists upon the earth.

The trees had fungus-like roots, which apparently drew their life from the air. The foliage was all next the moon's soil.

Contrary to the general supposition of the earth's scientists, there was no mountains in the moon. The supposed eminence upon which our voyagers had landed was but the common level. There were various deep sink holes, some of them to enormous depth, and it was upon the verge of one of these that our voyagers now were. Of course, they were all anxious to leave the Moonbeam for an exploring tour, but there was some precautionary steps to be taken. What ensued was surprising enough.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MOON.

Of course, Prof. Benton was not disposed to risk the lives of all by venturing into the atmosphere of the moon until he had first determined the fact as to whether it would support human life or not.

So he got out his instruments and began experiments.

The barometer evinced its same susceptibility to changes as upon the earth. A match burned in the Lunar atmosphere readily, and chemicals responded to experiment just the same as upon earth.

So Prof. Benton finally arrived at these very sage conclusions:

"There are the same component elements in the moon's atmosphere as that of the earth. Whether there exist others I cannot yet determine. Life-giving elements are plentiful, however. I think it is safe to breathe lunar air."

"Well," said Dick, "I am willing to be the one to try the experiment."

"I object!" cried Ned.

"Why?"

"I am not fitted to take the risk. If I should die——"

"Nonsense!" cried Prof. Elias, "there will be no need

of any such great risk as that. We will proceed by degrees to test the lunar atmosphere."

With which he opened a slide window on a crack and cautiously applied his nostrils to it. The result was most gratifying.

"Lunar atmosphere is all right," he cried. "It is about the same as that of the earth."

"Hurrah!" cried the boys.

All reserve was cast aside.

The generators were shut off, and the windows and doors of the shell unsealed. Then all stepped out.

If anything, the moon's air was more stimulating and less depressing than that of the earth.

"I believe it is more conducive to longevity," declared the professor. "In fact, it is an atmosphere well suited to people with pulmonary complaints. I believe they would find a cure here!"

"Let us then be the first to establish a health resort in the moon!" cried Dick. "With our system of quick transportation hither, it would quite outdo anything on the earth."

"Indeed, it would!" agreed Benton; "all the population of the earth would be found to make the trip. It would be necessary to establish regular lines of rapid-transit shells and poleographs. Is it not wonderful to think of?"

All instinctively glanced back at the earth.

It was merely a small moon in the blue ether, and, indeed, seemed at that distance to be oval instead of spherical in shape. This was no doubt an optical delusion due to the natural flattening of the poles.

Instinctively the travelers thought of their home and their friends in that distant globe. It was a tremendous realization and made them faint and giddy. Would they ever see them again?

However, they plucked up spirit and banished the matter from their minds for the time.

There were all-engrossing topics immediately before them, which now claimed their attention. All else was forgotten for the time.

Of course their stay in the moon was as yet so brief that they had been unable to learn whether it was inhabited or not. This question first occurred to Ned Davis.

"Have you seen any living thing yet?" he asked. "Where shall we find any sign of animal or human life? Is there not even an insect here?"

Professor Benton had just at that moment stepped into

the curious brittle grass. He gave a great start and cried: "Hello! What was that? Here is an answer to your question, Ned!"

Something had leaped out of the white grass at the professor's feet. It was now upon a single stalk and plainly visible.

Its character was that of the grasshopper common to the earth. But its conformation was a trifle different.

It was a bright cardinal hue with emerald eyes and wings which were transparent. Its forward legs were the longest, and had double the number of joints peculiar to the ordinary grasshopper. The grass was full of these insects, if such they could be called. There were also curious-looking flies and bugs and earthworms totally unlike any species known on the earth.

In truth, the moon was as well stocked insectivorously as the earth.

For a time our explorers were busily engaged in discovering these curious creatures, and the professor even tried to classify them. But as this was threatening to take up too much time, he abandoned it for the while.

"I believe we shall find all types of life in the moon, and in fact more than upon the earth," declared the professor. "But before we go further let us make all arrangements for a tour of discovery."

"That is right," cried Ned; "let us consider what we need for equipments."

"Something to eat, for one thing," cried Dick.

"Weapons, for another," said Ned.

"Oh, certainly," replied the professor; "but, first of all, what shall we do with the Moonbeam? Shall we leave it here?"

"By all means," said Dick. "We cannot take it with us, for it will not travel in any direction except upwards. We must leave it here."

"What if some harm should come to it?" asked Ned. "We would never be able to get back to the earth, then."

"I don't see how harm can come to it if we leave it in a safe position," said Dick. "We will put out the anchors, shut off the dynamos, close the doors and windows and then I would like to know how it can come to harm!"

"Only from some inhabitants of the moon who may chance to come upon it," declared Ned.

This was certainly well worth considering. The explorers exchanged glances.

"I don't see how we can conduct our explorations without leaving it," said Dick.

"That is true," agreed the professor. "We must take the risk."

And it was so decided.

The party was speedily equipped. All carried long range and powerful rifles. They also carried knapsacks of provisions on their back, for it was not as yet known whether the quality of the game to be found in the moon was suitable for human consumption.

Then they set forth. They took a last look at the Moonbeam, and the professor marked the time.

As the days in the moon were just twice as long as upon the earth, they knew that plenty of time lay between them and nightfall.

The sun had already risen and the earth, with its oval shape, was but dimly visible. It was not as clear to the gaze as when the sun was beneath the horizon.

Another peculiar thing about the days and nights of the moon was that the sun pursued an exactly opposite course from that witnessed on the earth.

At high noon the sun was at its highest angle, and instead of being directly overhead was but a few points above the horizon. Its course extended along the very verge of the horizon line, until at nightfall, or after its circuit, it sank out of sight and darkness reigned.

But the light from the planets made it quite light in the moon, save when clouds obscured the sky. Then the darkness was of the most intense description.

All these facts our explorers were soon to learn. They left the Moonbeam and struck a straight line along the ridge of a mighty depression, and for a forest of curious-looking trees, not half a mile distant.

Just before reaching the forest they passed to their left a curious-looking growth of jungle plants. These seemed to have no connection with the spongy soil, and were essentially an air plant.

But their crystal-white shoots and spears were extremely dense, and not easily penetrated.

The question as to whether bird life existed in the moon or not was here quickly answered.

From the jungle there suddenly flew forth in alarm the strangest looking feathered bipeds that any in our party had ever seen.

They were of a strange salmon and blue color, and in size were about equal to a crow. But their shape was vastly different.

Their heads were of abnormal size, and their wings were attached to their feet, much like those of the common bat. When they descended to the ground they simply swelled their canopy-like wings and fell. Previous to flying, they would roll over and over for fully a yard, like a ball of cotton.

"Well, I never!" cried Ned, raising his rifle. "What sort of outlandish creatures are those? I have a mind to give them a shot."

"Kill one for a specimen," cried the professor, who, with all his other accomplishments, was a naturalist.

"Do you really want one?"

"Yes."

Ned blazed away into the flock of strange birds. There was a scattering of feathers, and two dropped. The others flew away with strange cries.

The professor hastened to secure his specimen.

The noise of the rifle, however, created a tremendous commotion in the jungle.

There was a deafening series of squawks, and up into the air rose an immense number of the strangest looking birds our adventurers had ever seen.

To describe them in detail would require too much space, but one among them deserves special notice.

Unlike the others, it did not rise. There was a reason for this, as was quickly seen.

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

Passenger trains on the Mahoning division of the Erie railroad have been equipped with a device which records the speed over the entire distance traveled. If at the end of the run the device shows that the speed has exceeded that prescribed by the rules the enginemen are suspended. Trains are permitted to travel sixty miles an hour, but an engineer has a margin of six miles above that speed.

One of the factories that runs at the State penal farm, Greencastle, Ind., six days in the week is the one that turns out the chewing tobacco for the 700 inmates. The prisoners receive chewing tobacco, but no smoking. In order to minimize the cost of the great quantities of "chewing" used, the trustees put in a tobacco press and the raw material is bought and the licorice and other ingredients are put in the mixture, and it is all pressed on the farm. The inmates say the home-made "chewing" is as good as that made in the large factories.

Last year the Chinese Government tried the experiment of intrusting the building of nine gunboats to a Chinese company, the Yangtse Engineering Works, Limited, at Hankow. Three boats have been completed, and they have been launched. The remaining are under construction. The boats are stated to be about 100 feet in length, are intended for river use, and, while smaller, are like some of the river boats employed by foreign Governments.

The United States Lighthouse Service has recently devised a form of printed postcard for the use of mariners in reporting unsatisfactory condition of aids to navigation, which, it is believed, will be useful in obtaining prompt information as to defects in aids. The card is printed in such form that it is simply necessary to insert the name of the vessel reporting, with name of aid to navigation, and date and time when observed, together with any desirable additional remarks, and forward to the lighthouse inspector concerned. This arrangement will be given a trial in the fifth lighthouse district, with headquarters at Baltimore, Md., and if found satisfactory, its use will be extended to other districts.

The first municipal picnic in the United States was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, the other day. It was an event for grown-ups and children. The streets of the city were deserted, and, although 300,000 persons attended four parks in which the exercises were held, not a single accident marred the celebration. One of the most inspiring sights of the day's attractions was a dance in Eden Park. One of the reserve reservoirs, which has been undergoing repairs, was turned into a huge dancing floor. Nearly 10,000 persons were dancing when the bugle sounded, ending the programme.

A report comes to local officials that the British Ambassador at Washington has interested himself in the case

of Thomas Maxwell, now serving his forty-fourth year for a murder committed in Marinette County, Wis., in 1872. He was convicted of murdering Walter Foster in an altercation over a woman and given a life sentence, and for many years has been a trusty in Waupun. He is now nearing the age of ninety. It is reported relatives have died in England and have left him a large fortune. His parole will be asked.

Two small alligators, each about three feet long, but nearly twenty-five years old, are causing the city water department of Anderson, Ind., some concern because of their meat bill, although the cost has averaged not more than \$20 a year. The last bill just presented for meat was \$15 and because that bill was for only one feed, City Clerk Collins and City Comptroller Richter were astonished. It was explained, however, that the alligators had fasted since October last. It is regarded doubtful whether the alligators will again manifest hunger until next spring, but the records show that perfectly good meat for the two alligators has cost the city about \$400.

William Bernshouse, who is known as "the grand old man of Hammonton, N. J.," attributes his almost perfect health to the fact that he is an enthusiastic pedestrian and that he never has indulged in intoxicating liquor. He settled in Hammonton in the forties, at a time when there were less than a dozen houses in what now is the second largest municipality in Atlantic County. Although in his eighty-second year, Bernshouse averages from fifty to sixty miles of walking each week. About a year ago he was one of a party of surveyors who inspected and appraised the damage done to a timber tract where more than 4,000 acres were burned over by fire, supposedly caused by sparks from a locomotive.

Last autumn the storks left Russia and Galicia earlier than usual; they were noticed in flocks of thirty to a hundred on their way through Austria, where they alighted on the roofs and chimneys of the houses to rest before continuing their journey south. Other birds of passage have deserted their old routes of flight and have chosen new air-roads along less disturbed regions. Both going and returning, these birds were observed in places where they were never seen before and were missed in the localities where battles were raging. In Luxemburg, where otherwise millions of birds congregate in the leafy forests, there are now scarcely any to be seen or heard. As an instance how the birds have deserted Luxemburg, a nature lover writes that "whole oat fields have sprung up along the roads and in the market squares of the little towns and villages where the horses have been fed as the cavalry passed through." This would never have been possible in other years, for then the birds would soon have picked up every grain that fell to the ground.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

A vessel with 200 Detroit liquor dealers as passengers was recently refused permission to land at Goderich, Ontario, because many of those on board were of German birth or extraction, and the local Canadian authorities were of the opinion it was a "German invasion."

Declaring his white hair a deceptive ruse of the years, Hugh Cooper, ninety-three, begged Acting Judge Charles Clark of the North Side Municipal Court, Kansas City, to give him a chance to "come back." Cooper has been at the Jackson County Poor Farm, Kansas, for five years. "I am not a vagrant, your honor," Cooper said. "I left the farm because I hate to depend on charity for my livelihood. I left because I know I can come back." "Go and try it, and good luck to you," said the judge.

Tactics borrowed from the trench warfare in Europe enabled three robbers to loot the Farmers' State Bank, Jefferson, Okla. Before entering the bank the men broke into a hardware store and stole several coils of barbed wire with which they erected entanglements about the bank. Four charges of explosives were used to wreck the safe. The first explosion aroused the townspeople, but before the citizens could devise a way of overcoming the wire barrier, the robbers had taken \$2,000 and escaped in a motor car. Poses followed them as far as Hunniwell, Kan., but there lost the trail.

The American merchant marine has been building up rapidly since the outbreak of the present great war in Europe. The flag of the United States now flies on more vessels than at any time since 1863. Edwin F. Sweet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, made public on Aug. 30 figures for the fiscal year ended June 30, showing that on that date there were 2,768 ships, with a gross tonnage of 1,812,715, under American register in the foreign trade. This is an increase of 363 ships, with a gross tonnage of 1,110,000, for the year. Mr. Sweet regards the increase as due to the new American registry law.

The dragon trees of Tenerife are really a species of giant cacti. One tree, situated at Laguna, the commercial capital of the island, is said to be several

thousand years old. The growth of these dragon trees is very slow and they throw out no branches until they have blossomed, which seldom takes place before their fifteenth year and sometimes not until their thirtieth. The oldest dragon tree known in the island was that at Orotava, which was at least 6,000 years old—some botanists say 10,000. It was about sixty feet high, with a trunk forty-eight feet in circumference at the base. The ancient inhabitants of the island, the Guanonos, performed their religious rites in its hollow trunk. In 1867 the upper part of the tree was broken off during a storm, and though every effort was made to preserve the remainder it gradually decayed and there is now no trace of it left. The sap of the tree, a resinous substance like dark treacle, is called dragon's blood. It becomes brittle and crumbling when dry and is an article of commerce used in medicine. There are other kinds of dragon trees in different parts of the world, but this particular species is peculiar to the Canary and Cape Verde islands.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Oh, John, dear, don't you hear?" said Mrs. Kidby. "How delightfully the baby crows!" "Crows? Humph!" said Kidby, "I'd crow myself if I were boss of the house."

Pastor—It would surprise you to know how much counterfeit money we receive in the contribution boxes in the course of a year. Thoughtful Friend—I suppose so. How do you manage to work it all off?

Little Ned—Don't take away the light. Mamma—I want you to learn to sleep without a light. Little Ned—Must I sleep in the dark? Mamma—Yes. Little Ned—Well, then, wait a minute. I guess I'll get up and say my prayers a little more carefully.

Edward—Isn't Dick going off in his writings? Forrest—I hadn't noticed it. Edward—It seems to me he has lost that exquisite delicacy of touch he used to have. Forrest (ruefully)—By Jove! You wouldn't think so if you had seen him work me for a ten this morning.

A washerwoman applied for help to a gentleman, who gave her a note to the manager of a certain club. It read as follows: "Dear Mr. X.—This woman wants washing." Very shortly the answer came back: "Dear Sir—I can say she does, but I don't fancy the job."

"Witness," said a lawyer in the police court the other day, "you speak of Mr. Smith being well off. Is he worth \$5,000?" "No, sah." "Two thousand?" "No, sah. He hain't worf twenty-five cents." "Then how is he well off?" "Got a wife, sah, who s'ports de hull family, sah."

Car Driver—Me and that off horse has been working for the company for twelve years now. Passenger—That so? The company must think a great deal of you both. Car Driver—Well, I dunno. Last week the two of us were taken sick, and they got a doctor for the horse and d-d-d me. Got up there now, Patsy!

THE MIDNIGHT SPECTER.

By Horace Appleton

I am a young clergyman.

I shall call myself Howard Dane.

What I am about to relate actually happened to me; at least, my senses tell me that it did.

I was not asleep and dreaming.

Of course, it is possible that I was mad; but that I should have been mad for just two hours and with nobody's knowledge I cannot believe.

I am, however, so suspicious of myself whenever I think upon the facts that I have never told them to my nearest friends.

I narrate them now under an assumed name, and feeling positive that they will come to the ears of no one who can possibly connect me with them, hoping in this way to be rid of a sort of nightmare that has haunted me for more than two years.

At that time, having a summer vacation, I resolved to spend it in visiting certain picturesque places of which I had heard much, and of which I had never yet looked upon.

And, first of all, to go to a place which I shall call Paradise Springs, though I must not allow you to think that I have given it its proper designation.

It was a sort of quiet watering-place, and there was a large hotel near the springs, but I did not purpose stopping there.

I intended to seek some more secluded lodging-place, where I could dress as I chose, and really recruit my health.

I entered the postoffice and inquired of the postmaster whether he knew of some quiet family who might be willing to take a boarder.

At the same time I informed him of my name and my vocation.

The postmaster, a good-natured sort of man, rubbing his chin for a while, said, slowly:

"Well, sir, I don't know many that haven't their houses full at this season of the year. There's one woman, to be sure, a decent widow, who has plenty of room, and would be willing enough to do for you; but the question is, whether you'd like it? Perhaps, though, being a clergyman, you'll laugh at me when I tell you why; but, to be fair with you, the place is said to be haunted. Old Ganley, who owns it, hasn't been able to let it for ten years; and when Mrs. Ridge, poor soul, had a mortgage foreclosed on her farm and was turned out of the old homestead, neck and crop, as one might say, why, old Ganley just goes to her and says: 'Now, Mrs. Ridge, if you choose to try my house rent free, you can. You can have it a year for nothing, if you can live there that long. And after that we'll talk it over.' And Mrs. Ridge, poor thing, says: 'Why, Mr. Ganley, I will, and thank you, too; and I tell you more, I'll scour the ghost out of the house for you.' Ghosts, in my opinion, Mr. Ganley, are mostly harmless."

So the widow went over to the house, and she has kept it clean, and she says that, though she hears queer things

enough, and sees queer things, too, she's not afraid of 'em; but this summer she's tried to take boarders, and she's had half a dozen come and go. They stay one night; never any more. One of 'em had a fit and one a fever from what they saw, or thought they saw; and so, though the widow would like boarders, and is as tidy a housekeeper and as good a cook as any woman living, her rooms are empty. It would be a charity if you could try 'em—and if Satan is in that house, as some folks say, perhaps you could send him flying, being a clergyman."

"I will take Mrs. Ridge's address, if you will give it to me," said I. "At least I am not afraid of ghosts. If the house does not appear to be unhealthy I will brave whatever haunts it for a while."

Then, having been told to go straight on until I reached the church, and then turn to the left past the churchyard, and walk until I came to a red house on a hill, I thanked the postmaster and started on my way.

It was late in the day; the shadows already lay long beneath the trees that were set upon either side of the road.

At last I reached the house and opened the gate.

A woman instantly appeared on the threshold.

She was a tall, lean, worried-looking person of middle age, but she had a kind face, and, when I had explained my business, she smiled pleasantly, and answered:

"Well, now, it was kind of the postmaster to send you, and, since you know the ghost story, why, there's no need of my talking about it. I've always had a fancy that if I had more education I could find out all about it. Ghosts I never believed in, and this ain't a damp house built over a marsh. Its cellar is as dry as a chip, and the foundations are all right. A builder came up here one day to examine 'em, and he said so; but I think—I think——" said Mrs. Ridge, rubbing her hands, "that it's something—scientific—very likely, that causes all these things; and when I hear a groan or so, and see something white I can't account for going upstairs, I say that to myself, and it quiets me down."

I bowed.

Oddly as she expressed herself, I knew very well what poor Mrs. Ridge meant.

Natural and not supernatural causes had frightened away her boarders, and proper investigation might reveal the secret.

Perhaps such investigation might be amusing.

Meanwhile Mrs. Ridge lived rent free, and the ghost might be regarded as her benefactor.

I took possession of my room at once, choosing the one that was pre-eminently the haunted chamber.

Then, while my hostess was preparing tea, I wandered out, and without premeditation turned my steps toward the church—an old, moss-grown edifice—and leaning over the railing looked at the quiet graves that now lay in heavy shadow. I did not care to go in, or to read the epitaphs that doubtless gave, as they usually do, unmerited meed of praise to those who, while living, never had their due; but, turning away, I glanced down at my feet and saw that I had nearly trodden on a little exiled grave without the paling.

It was strange that it should have been made there.

Never in my experience had I seen a grave in such a position.

The grass grew thick upon it, wild roses nearly covered it, and, stooping low, I read upon the rough, gray stone at its head this one word—Jane.

Nothing else.

No age, no date, no praise. No scrap of verses.

Jane—and no more.

And who was Jane? I asked myself.

Some one too humble to lie amidst her betters in the graveyard there.

Somehow I breathed a sigh for Jane as I turned away from her resting-place.

The sun was quite gone now.

Twilight lay gray upon the scene; only a silver line kissed the purple tops of the distant hills.

As I walked on I remember now that several times I fancied I heard a light step following me, but turning I saw no one.

We had our tea in the kitchen, at a tiny table covered with a snowy cloth.

It was a good and comfortable meal.

Soon after, weary with my journey, I asked for a candle, and bade my hostess good night.

In ten minutes I was sound asleep.

It was midnight when I awakened, with a strange sensation creeping through my veins—a thrill rather than a chill.

I did not feel ill, but I confess I did feel frightened.

The room was almost perfectly dark, but through the darkness I saw a white shape pass and repass the foot of my bed.

It was slight and low, but after a little I saw it more plainly.

It bore the likeness of a human form, and it carried something in its arms.

"Am I dreaming?" I asked myself.

No, I was certainly wide awake.

My impulse was an ignoble one, I will confess it.

It was to cover my head with the quilts.

"You shall not do it," I said to myself. "You shall look and know what it is that you have looked upon if such knowledge may be had. It may be that it is vouchsafed you to see what mortals call a ghost. It will not happen again. Make the most of so fine an opportunity."

Resolutely I sat up in bed.

A thought came to me.

The widow Ridge might well desire to live rent free for the remainder of her life.

It might be worth her while to perform the role of apparition.

But now I saw the figure plainly.

It was that of a woman—or, rather, of a young and delicate girl.

It was clothed in a shroud-like garment, and held in its arms the semblance of a babe.

By what light I saw it I cannot tell; but its very features were growing plain to me.

Its eyes—large, sad eyes, with dark iris—turned upon me.

It mutely extended its hand and offered me something.

I extended mine to receive it.

As I touched it I knew that it was my own prayer-book, open at a certain place.

It was open at the burial service.

"You are not well this morning, sir," said my landlady at the breakfast-table.

"Quite well now," I answered. I had resolved to keep my own counsel.

That night, after long rambles in the woods and pleasant idleness under the orchard trees, I retired to the haunted chamber once again.

I threw myself outside of the counterpane, fully dressed, but slumber overcame me.

Again I awoke, this time to see a figure, fully revealed as by clear moonlight, very close to me—a girl in her shroud, with a babe in her arms.

She had taken my prayer-book from the table and held it toward me.

Again it was open at the burial service.

This time I took it from her boldly.

"What do you want? Why do you come here? Why do you show me this?" I asked.

And then came an answer, a strange, faint, far-away whisper.

"I want you to bury me!"

"To bury you?" I repeated. "Who are you?"

Fainter and fainter still came the voice, "I am Jane!" and the figure vanished.

And now there arose before me a memory of the lonely grave without the churchyard paling—the grave on whose headstone that little name was written.

Led by an impulse I could not resist, I, still keeping the prayer-book open in my hand, left my room, and, going downstairs, unbarred the hall-door and found myself in the open air; bareheaded I walked through the starlight to the graveyard.

I heard gentle footsteps behind me all the way, but I did not turn to see who followed.

At last I stood beside the exiled grave—and, still obeying the impulse that moved me against my judgment, read aloud the burial service.

At its close I heard a faint sigh, but I saw nothing.

When some weeks had passed thus peacefully I asked my hostess a few questions.

"Who was the ghost who haunted this house?" I asked. "and why was he said to haunt it? Is there a tradition concerning him?"

"It was said to be a young woman's ghost," said Mrs. Ridge, a faint blush rising to her cheek. "The old laws were very strict. Her husband, that she'd married secretly, ran off, and she couldn't prove her marriage. Nothing! and they would not let her lie within the churchyard ground. Her old grandfather buried her and her babe just outside the paling. You can see the grave there with her name—'Jane'—upon it. The minister who would not bury her lived here when the son was about. It used to be the parsonage."

I returned home at the end of my vacation and heard no more of Mrs. Ridge until the next year.

Then I found that she had prospered greatly.

Her house was full of boarders, whom the ghost never troubled, and she would probably soon be in condition to purchase it.

NEWS OF THE DAY

According to statistics published by the Pan-American Union, there were on January 1st, 1914, 232,816 telephones in Latin-America, as compared with 9,542,000 in the United States. Argentina stood first among the Latin-American countries, with 74,296, but Uruguay led in the proportion of telephones to population, with 1.05 per 100.

A neatly dressed, smooth-shaven man, about 60 years old, wearing spectacles, crossed the New York Central tracks between Hastings-on-Hudson and Dobbs Ferry the other afternoon. Slowly he undressed on the river bank and put on a bathing suit. From a pocket he drew a quart bottle of whisky and when he put it down it was empty. Then he waded out and fell face downward in the water. John Ryan and James Higgins, small boys in a rowboat, seized the man by his bathing suit, while the other rowed, and thus they towed him to shore.

Robert E. Peary, who was retired by act of Congress with the rank of Rear Admiral in recognition of his discovery of the North Pole in 1909, has offered his services to the Navy Department for any duty he may be called upon to perform. It was learned recently that he had written to Secretary Daniels, offering to take the necessary physical examination and perform any services which might be required of him in the development of the programme for national defense and military and naval preparedness.

It cost Herbert Holman, a young automobilist, who said he lived in a small town in Pennsylvania, \$25 the other day to gain a bit of knowledge as to the area of the "Village of Brooklyn." In the Flatbush Court, the young visitor was charged with overspeeding his motor on the Ocean Parkway. "Why, judge," he said, evidently puzzled over the complaint, "I was away outside the village limits at the time I put on speed." "Well, my young friend," returned the court, "you are now to learn that Brooklyn is some village and the tuition fee will be \$25." The astonished motorist from the Keystone State paid the fine and then hurried away to buy a map of New York City.

Some of our shore birds appear to make traveling their chief occupation. The American golden plover arrives in early June in the bleak, wind-swept "barren grounds" of Alaska, above the Arctic circle and far beyond the tree line, and, while the lakes are still icebound, hurriedly fashions a shabby little nest in the moss. By August it is in Labrador, where it stuffs itself with such quantities of "marrow-bones" that its flesh is actually stained by the dark purple juice. From Nova Scotia it strikes out to sea, and takes a direct course for the West Indies, one thousand miles away, finally reaching Brazil and the prairies of Argentina. Sixteen thousand miles does it traverse in order to spend ten weeks on the Arctic coast.

Dislike of the publicity that attended the efforts of physicians to stop the hiccupping of Cortland Brooks, of Greenport, L. I., ten months ago, caused his relatives to keep secret the fact that the affliction had finally caused his death. Mr. Brooks became seriously ill almost a year ago, and began to hiccup. Greenport physicians tried in vain to halt the convulsions, and then called in specialists. Their efforts were also unavailing, and Brooks was finally taken to the Brooklyn Hospital last Thanksgiving Day and placed in a plaster cast, but he continued to hiccup, even when asleep. The surgeons decided that he had tuberculosis of the spine, and that the diseased bones were pressing on certain nerves, causing the convulsions. The case was pronounced unique, although tuberculosis of the spine is not uncommon.

The inferiority of the German aeroplane was made apparent in the early days of the war, as they were wholly unable to cope with either the French or the English machines in speed or in climbing abilities, and, as a result, the Taube flyers have been seen but seldom this year, and when they appeared they were careful not to venture near the firing lines. Now, however, it is stated that a new type of machine has appeared that is fully equal to anything the Allies possess. Little is known of the nature of the improvements in these new machines, but from their observed evolutions, it is quite evident that they are provided with engines of a power and reliability not heretofore possessed by the Germans, and those who have seen them have been much impressed with their speed and climbing abilities.

With an almost complete absence of demand from Europe, which is the chief market for furs, from the costly black fox and glossy beaver to the humble skunk and muskrat, combined with a material decline in the values of the higher priced pelts, the lot of the fur dealer or trapper in the Canadian Northwest is not a highly remunerative one at present. The supply is very good, according to reports from the North, which fact may tend to force prices still lower. One business house which has been doing considerable trade with Northern trappers and fur dealers reports that many of the well-known fur traders in Northern British Columbia and the Yukon are unable to pay their bills, because they have been unable to obtain anything like reasonable prices for their furs. It is anticipated, however, that there will be a demand for moderate-priced furs in the near future. A prominent dealer in Vancouver has pointed out that when times were good people were willing to pay high prices for the best furs and that they now require furs having the same artistic effect, but at a very moderate price. Black furs will be much in demand in Europe and elsewhere because of the almost universal mourning. Other furs, like the white fox, muskrat, and lynx, will be dyed black to meet the demand.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

BARK ENDS WHALING CAREER.

The old whaling bark Morning Star was sold recently to the Eastern Coal Company of Providence, R. I., to carry coal from Southern ports after being in the whaling trade since 1853, when she was built at Dartmouth, Mass., by Matthew Mashow & Co. She is 238 tons burden.

The Morning Star sailed on her first voyage from New Bedford Nov. 10, 1853, under command of Captain Wm. Cleveland, and returned May 18, 1857, with 1,503 barrels of sperm oil. She came back from her last voyage on Sept. 17, 1914, under command of Captain Valentine Roza with 3,085 barrels of sperm oil after being away two years. During her sixty-two years of blubber hunting the Morning Star has been in every ocean, and is one of the last of the old wooden fleet of sailing whalers which filled the harbor of New Bedford fifty years ago.

\$3,000 SEWED IN SKIRT.

Mrs. Emma Shute, of Somerville, Ohio, fifty-six years old, expensively dressed and of evident refinement, who was found wandering aimlessly about the steamship piers at Twenty-third street and the Hudson River, is New York City, is in Bellevue Hospital. When she arrived the hems of her garments began to break with their weight of wealth and out rolled \$1,500 in gold coin and jewelry worth at least \$1,500. In an undergarment she had sewed two bank books, showing cash deposits of \$10,000 in the German National Bank of Cincinnati and \$10,000 in the Bank of Cincinnati.

She was unable to say how she came to be in this city or where she was stopping. The bank books revealed her identity and the fact that her husband, Henry Shute, is a resident of Somerville, Ohio.

Policemen had seen Mrs. Shute wandering about the piers and asking senseless questions. From each pier she was turned away, the employees not having time to talk with her. She was in an exceptionally dangerous part of the city. Across West street are many sailors' drinking-houses and there is a rough element in the side streets.

"It was fortunate that she did not lose consciousness there," said Dr. Gregory at Bellevue. "She easily could have been robbed of everything she had and perhaps her body would have been dropped into the river."

MEN AVAILABLE FOR WAR DUTY IN NEW YORK.

There are 2,500,000 men in New York State between the ages of 18 and 45, and, therefore, available for war duty, Secretary of State Hugo announced recently in one of his census bulletins.

The June enumeration shows, he says, that there were approximately 250 officers and 6,800 enlisted men at the army posts of the State; 60 officers and 1,300 men in New York's naval militia, and 1,000 officers and 16,080 men in the National Guard. Thousands of men besides these have had some military training, either in the regular army, National Guard or in college or military academies.

Figures obtained from the Adjutant General's office

show little change in the strength of the National Guard in fifty years. At present it stands: Officers, 1,009; enlisted men, 16,080; total, 17,069. In 1857 it was: Officers, 1,827; enlisted men, 14,608; total, 16,434.

The possible strength of the division under the present Federal regulations is: Officers, 743; enlisted men, 21,930; total, 22,673.

To give more men at least the rudiments of a military training, Lieut.-Col. E. V. Howard, of the Adjutant General's office, favors what he terms a "mild conscription." Every young man on reaching the age of eighteen years would be called to serve under the colors for three years, during which time he would give thirty days of active service each year. A call to arms would find then thousands of men better fitted to serve their country.

THE BAKER'S THERMOMETER.

"Bakers have a curious way of telling just what the temperature of the oven is," said a baker who had been in the business for more than a quarter of a century, "and they can tell, too, with almost marvelous accuracy. You take a man who is an expert in the business, and he can tell what the temperature of the oven is by simply touching the handle of the oven door. In nine cases out of ten he will not miss it to the fraction of a degree.

"Bakers have other ways, of course, of testing the heat of the oven. For instance, when baking bread they sometimes throw a piece of white paper into the oven, and if it turns brown the oven is at the proper temperature. Or, when baking other things they will throw a little cornmeal flour into the oven in order to test the heat. But the baker's fingers are the best gauge, and when you come to think of the different temperatures required in baking different things, it is no small achievement to even approximate the heat of the oven by touching the handle of the oven door.

"Baker's figure that during the rising time of a loaf of bread, after it has been placed in the oven, it ought to be in a temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit. During the baking process, in order to cook the starch, expand the carbonic acid gas, air and steam and drive off the alcohol, the inside of the loaf must register at least 220 degrees. In baking rolls, buns, scones, tea biscuits, drop cakes, fancy cakes, New York cakes, muffins, puff cakes and things of that sort the oven must show a heat of 450 degrees or higher.

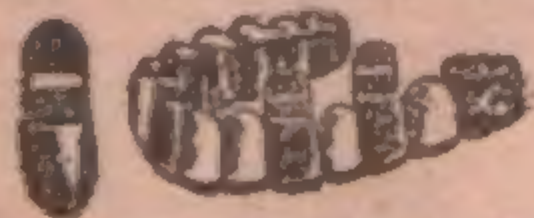
"When the oven is at 400 degrees it is fit for cream puffs, sugar cakes, queen cakes, rock cakes, jumbles, loaf cakes, rough-and-ready and jelly rolls. At 350 degrees are cakes, cup cakes, ginger nuts and snaps, pies, gingerbread, spice cakes, such as raisin, currant, citron, pound cake, and so on, may be baked. It requires a still higher temperature to bake wedding cakes, kisses, and other things in this class.

"But whatever temperature the old baker wants he can tell when he has it by simply touching the handle of the oven door."

THE BURNING CIGARETTE.

The greatest trick joke out. A perfect imitation of a smouldering cigarette with bright red fire. It fools the wisest. Send 10c. and we will mail it. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

IMITATION GOLD TEETH.



Gold plated tooth, shape made so that it will fit any tooth. Price, 5c., postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.



It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoe from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

SEE-SAW PUZZLE.



The most absorbing puzzle seen for years. The kind you sit up half the night to do. The puzzle is to get both balls, one in each pocket. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase. Price, 30c. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

DELUSION TRICK.



A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

THE MAGIC NAIL.



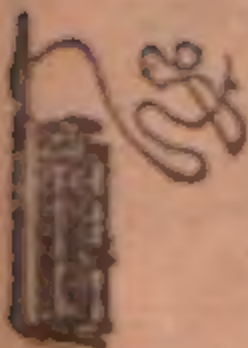
A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given to be examined. Nicely finished. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE.



You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Quite an effective illusion. Price 10c. each by mail. **FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.**

RAVELLING JOKE.

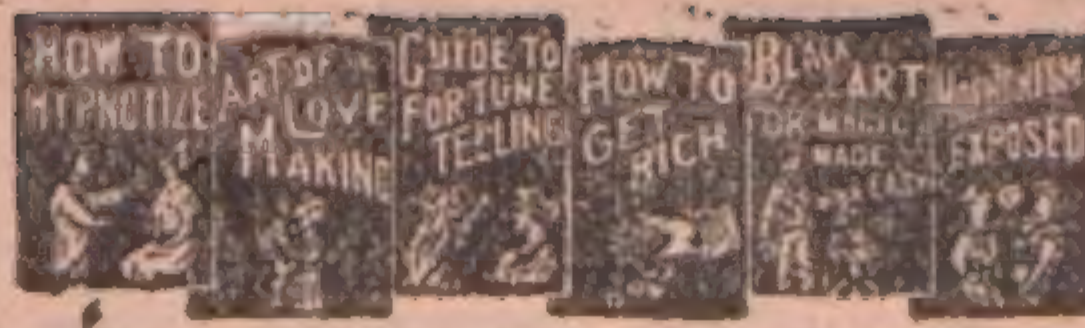


Yards upon yards of laughs. Don't miss it! Everyone falls for this one. It consists of a nice little bobbin around which is wound a spool of thread. You pin the bobbin under the lapel of your coat, and pull the end of the thread through your button hole, then watch your friends try to pick the piece of thread off your coat. Enough said! Get one! Price, 12c. each, by mail. Postage stamps taken same as money. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

GIANT SAW PUZZLE.



This puzzle contains twenty-one pieces of wood nicely finished; take them apart and put them together same as illustrated. Everybody would like to try it, as it is very fascinating. Price, by mail, postpaid, 25c. each. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

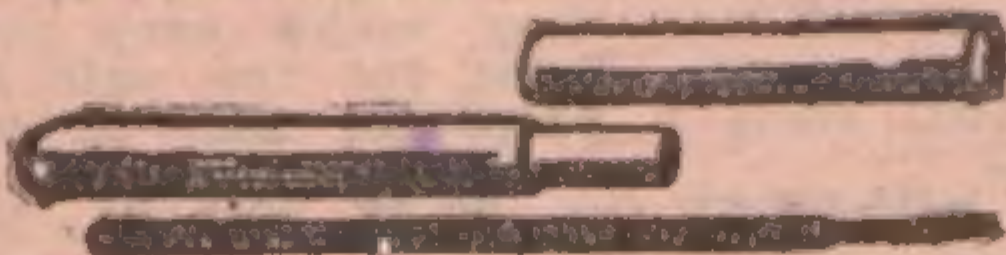


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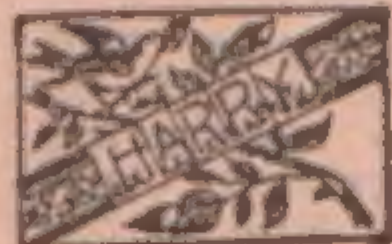
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GLASS PEN.—Patent glass pen, with nice dip, writes like any ordinary pen; each put up in wooden box. Price, 10c., postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

NAME CARDS.



The newest fad in picture postals. They are beautifully lithographed in a variety of colors and have various names, such as Harry, Edith, etc., printed on the reverse side. Just the thing to mail to your friends. Price 6 for 10 cents, by mail, postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

TRICK CUP.



Made of natural white wood turned, with two compartments; a round, black ball fits on those compartments; the other is a stationary ball. By a little practice you make the black ball vanish; a great trick novelty and immense seller. Price, 10c., postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

SURPRISE PERFUME BOTTLE.



Those in the joke may freely smell the perfume in the bottle, but the uninitiated, on removing the cork will receive the contents in his hands. This is a simple and clever joke. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

DEAD SHOT SQUIRT PISTOL.



If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the Pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocket your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.



Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

Ayvad's Water-Wings.



Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid
 These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthholes. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

ASTHMA

REMEDY sent to you on TRIAL. If it cures, send \$1.00; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. **W. K. Sterilas, 837 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio.**

TRICK MATCHES.



Consist of a Swedish safety box, filled with matches, which will not light. Just the thing to cure the match borrowing habit. Price, 5c., postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

LINK THE LINK PUZZLE.



The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without mastering it, still it can be done in two seconds by giving the links the proper twist, but unless you know how, the harder you twist them the tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; one dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

POCKET SAVINGS BANK.



A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

SURPRISE MOVING-PICTURE MACHINE.



It consists of a small nicked metal tube, 4 1/4 inches long, with a lens eye-view, which shows a pretty ballet girl or any other scene. Hand it to a friend who will be delighted with the first picture, tell him to turn the screw on the side of the instrument, to change the views, when a stream of water squirts in his face, much to his surprise. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, and one filling will suffice for four or five victims. Price, 30c. each by mail, postpaid; 4 for \$1.00. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

SURPRISE KINEMATOGRAPH.



The greatest hit of the season! It consists of a small metal, nicked tube, with a lens eye view, which shows a pretty ballet girl in tights. Hand it to a friend, who will be delighted with the first picture; tell him to turn the screw in center of instrument to change the views, when a stream of water squirts into his face, much to his disgust. Anyone who has not seen this kinematograph in operation is sure to be caught every time. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, ready for the next customer. Price 25c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

EGGS OF PHARAOH'S SERPENTS.



A wonderful and startling novelty! "Pharaoh's Serpents" are produced from a small egg, no larger than a pea. Place one of them on a plate, touch fire to it with a common match, and instantly a large serpent, a yard or more in length, slowly uncoils itself from the burning egg. Each serpent assumes a different position. One will appear to be gliding over the ground, with head erect, as though spying danger; another will coil itself up, as if preparing for the fatal spring upon its victim, while another will stretch out lazily, apparently enjoying its usual noonday nap. Immediately after the egg stops burning, the serpent hardens, and may afterward be kept as an amusing curiosity. They are put up in wooden boxes, twelve eggs in a box. Price, 8c., 3 boxes for 20c.; 1 dozen boxes for 60c., sent by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**



JUMPING CARD.—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

DICE WATCHES

One of our best novelties. About the size of a watch, with a nickel case. A glass face encloses several ivory dice. On the rim of the case is a spring. By pressing it the dice are spun and scattered. The most intensely interesting games can be played with it. It can be carried in the vest pocket. Formerly sold for \$1.00.

Price, 30c. each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



TANGO TOP

A brand new novelty. More fun than a circus. You spin the post with your fingers, and the snake tangoes all around the top of the circular metal box, without falling off, although it is not fastened in any way.

When the post stops spinning, the snake drops from the lid. What is the secret of its great attraction to the post? The marvel of the age.

Price, 10c. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



STRING PUZZLE

This puzzle is a wonder. It consists of two pieces of wood. A hole is bored through the upper end of both. A red string passes through the holes. Take a knife, insert it between the

wooden blocks and cut upwards. You separate the pieces of wood, and the string is apparently cut in two. Close the blocks together, seize an end of the string, and you can pull the entire cord through the holes, absolutely—not cut. Very mystifying.

Price, 12c. each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



THE FIGHTING ROOSTERS.



A full blooded pair of fighting game cocks. These Illiputian fighters have real feathers, yellow legs and fiery red combs, their movements when fighting are perfectly natural and lifelike, and the secret of their movements is known only to the operator, who can cause them to battle with each other as often and as long as desired. Independent of their fighting proclivities they make very pretty mantel ornaments. Price for the pair in a strong box, 10c.; 3 pairs for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

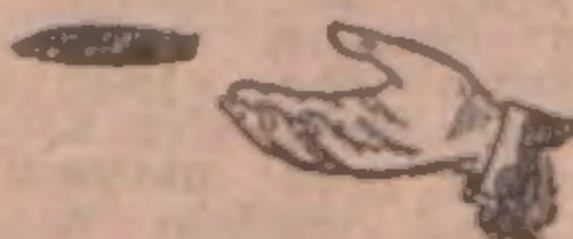
INITIAL WATCH FOB.



It has a neat enameled black strap, and small secure buckle, with a patent catch so that no watch can slip off. The handsome tortoise shell pendants are beautifully engraved with any initial you desire. The letter is fire gilt, cannot rub off, and is studded with nine Barrios diamonds. These fobs are the biggest value ever offered. Price, 25c. each, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE DISAPPEARING CIGAR.



A new and startling trick. You ask a friend if he will have a cigar; if he says yes (which is usually the case), you take from your pocket or cigar case, an ordinary cigar, and hand it to him. As he reaches out for it, the cigar instantly disappears right before his eyes, much to his astonishment. You can apologize, saying, you are very sorry, but that it was the last cigar you had, and the chances are that he will invite you to smoke with him if you will let him into the secret. It is not done by sleight-of-hand, but the cigar actually disappears so suddenly that it is impossible for the eye to follow it, and where it has gone, no one can tell. A wonderful illusion.

Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

SMALL COLLAPSIBLE PENCILS

The name is a joke. It looks small enough while it is hanging on your watch-chain, and it is very handsome in design, prettily nickeled, and very compact. But just hand the end of it to your friend, and it begins to untelescope until he imagines there is no end to it. Besides its ability to make fun, it is a good useful pencil, too.

Price, 15c. each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



KNITTER

Every boy who wants a whip-lash, pair of reins, or any other knitted article of similar kind should have a Knitter. Anybody can work it. The most beautiful designs can be made by using

colored worsteds with this handy little object. It is handsomely lacquered, strongly made, and the wires are very durable.

Price, 10c. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

CRAWLING BUGS

These giant beetles are beautifully enameled in natural, brilliant colors. There is a roller underneath, actuated by hidden springs. When the roller is wound up the bug crawls about in the most lifelike manner. Try one on the maid if you want to enjoy yourself.

Price, 12c. each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.—A small round box is shown to be empty and one of the spectators is allowed to place three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators, who, upon removing the cover, finds six corks in the box. Three of the corks are now made to vanish as mysteriously as they came. Very deceptive.

Price, 15c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

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